

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
**National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

**1. Name of Property**

Historic Name: Longhorn Ballroom  
Other name/site number: Bob Wills' Ranch House  
Name of related multiple property listing: NA

**2. Location**

Street & number: 200 Corinth Street  
City or town: Dallas State: Texas County: Dallas Zip Code: 75207  
Not for publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  
(☒ 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.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:  
☐ national ☒ statewide ☐ local

Applicable National Register Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

Mark Wolfe State Historic Preservation Officer 11/29/23  
Signature of certifying official / Title Date  
Texas Historical Commission  
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that the property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register  
☐ determined eligible for the National Register  
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register  
☐ removed from the National Register  
☐ other, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

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

Longhorn Ballroom, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

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

### Category of Property

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

### Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
1	0	objects
3	0	total

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

## 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions:** RECREATION AND CULTURE/music facility; COMMERCIAL/business, restaurant

**Current Functions:** RECREATION AND CULTURE/music facility; Work in Progress

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification:** MID-CENTURY MODERN NONRESIDENTIAL/other

**Principal Exterior Materials:** Brick, Wood, Concrete, Metal

**Narrative Description** (see continuation sheets 9-15)

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

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

**Criteria Considerations:** G

**Areas of Significance:** Entertainment/Recreation (state level)

**Period of Significance:** 1950-1978

**Significant Dates:** 1950, 1978

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

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

**Architect/Builder:** Unknown

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (see continuation sheets 16-36)

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

**Bibliography** (see continuation sheets 37-41)

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested. (*Part 1 approved October 14, 2021*)
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

### Primary location of additional data:

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

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

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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property:** 4.41 acres

### Coordinates

#### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

1. Latitude: 32.759640° Longitude: -96.792990°

**Verbal Boundary Description:** The nominated boundary is the current legal parcel "Block 76/7345, Lots 1–3 and 5–15." See maps, pages 48-49.

This property is oriented northwest-southeast and is bounded by Corinth Street to the northwest, South Riverfront Boulevard to the southwest, the Trinity River meander to the northeast, and Block 76/7345, Lot 16 to the southeast. In addition, it is bounded to the north by and abuts the southeast and southwest sides of Block 76/7345, Lot 4.

**Boundary Justification:** The boundary includes the property transferred with the sale of the Longhorn Ballroom complex from O. L. Nelms to Dewey Groom in 1967.

## 11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Steph McDougal, Jennifer Beggs, and Marcel Quimby, FAIA, with NR Coordinator Gregory Smith (THC)

Organization: McDoux Preservation LLC with Quimby Preservation Studio

Street & number: 18214 Upper Bay Road #58114

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Date: April 4, 2022; revised through December 2023

## Additional Documentation

**Maps** (see continuation sheets 45-47)

**Additional items** (see continuation sheets 48-62)

**Photographs** (see continuation sheets 63-90)



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## Photographs

Longhorn Ballroom  
210 Corinth Street, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas  
Photographed December 2023 by Britain Venner and Amanda Coleman

### EXTERIOR PHOTOS

#### Photo 1

Longhorn Ballroom sign, view northeast.

#### Photo 2

Longhorn Ballroom building (left), multi-use building (right), Longhorn Ballroom sign (center) and gates/fence with lone star and wagon wheel design, as seen from northwest side of Corinth Street, view southeast.

#### Photo 3

Longhorn Ballroom sign (left), Longhorn Ballroom building (center), multi-use building (right), view east.

#### Photo 4

Longhorn Ballroom building (left), rear elevation of masonry wall (center), Longhorn Ballroom sign and multi-use building (right), view south.

#### Photo 5

Northwest façade of multi-use building (right) and gates/fence with lone star and wagon wheel design (left), view east.

#### Photo 6

Southwest elevation of multi-use building, view east.

#### Photo 7

Southwest elevation of multi-use building, view north.

#### Photo 8

Multi-use building (left) and Longhorn Ballroom building (right), view northwest from vacant land at the southeast end of the property.

#### Photo 9

Easternmost end of the Longhorn Ballroom building's northeast elevation, view west.

#### Photo 10

Southwest elevation of the Longhorn Ballroom building, view east.

#### Photo 11

Non-historic mural and double entry doors to performance space, southwest elevation of the Longhorn Ballroom building, view northeast.

#### Photo 12

Faux "livery stable" and "store" projections flanked by double entry doors to performance space, southwest elevation of the Longhorn Ballroom building, view northeast.

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**Photo 13**

Non-historic mural of a cattle drive, southwest elevation of the Longhorn Ballroom building, view northeast.

**Photo 14**

Former barbecue pit with restored neon sign and non-historic murals featuring musicians (and previous owners) Bob Wills and Dewey Groom, southwest elevation of the Longhorn Ballroom building, view northeast.

**Photo 15**

Southwest elevation of the Longhorn Ballroom building with restored neon sign above the former barbecue pit, view north.

**Photo 16**

Non-historic mural featuring musician (and previous owner) Dewey Groom, southwest elevation of the Longhorn Ballroom building, view northeast.

**Photo 17**

Southwest façade of masonry wall/gate with faux Western scene on the northeast side of parking area, view east.

**Photo 18**

Northeast (rear) elevation of masonry wall/gate, view south.

**Photo 19**

Northeast elevation of the multi-use building, view west from parking area.

**Photo 20**

Northeast elevation of the multi-use building with entry to former restaurant, view west from exterior staircase landing.

**Photo 21**

Northeast elevation of the multi-use building, view south from parking area.

**Photo 22**

Northeast elevation of the multi-use building, view west from exterior staircase landing.

**Photo 23**

First-floor windows and doors, northeast elevation of the multi-use building, view southeast.

**Photo 24**

Second-floor balcony, northeast elevation of the multi-use building, view east towards the Longhorn Ballroom building.

**Photo 25**

Windows and doors along second-floor balcony, northeast elevation of the multi-use building, view southeast.

**Photo 26**

Second-floor balcony, northeast elevation of the multi-use building, view northwest.

**Photo 27**

Second-floor balcony with faux windows and doors, southwest elevation of the multi-use building, view southeast.

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**Photo 28**

Tall wooden fence and metal wagon wheel gate enclosing the parking area and "Texas Walk of Fame" walkway (left), view east towards vacant land at southeast end of the property.

INTERIOR LONGHORN BALLROOM BUILDING

**Photo 29**

Main entrance area with framed memorabilia and display case, view north.

**Photo 30**

Main stage as seen from the expanded sunken dance floor, view east.

**Photo 31**

Interior performance space, view southeast.

**Photo 32**

Interior performance space overlooking the expanded sunken dance floor, view northwest.

**Photo 33**

Interior performance space with double entry doors and main entrance (right), view southwest.

**Photo 34**

Interior performance space overlooking the expanded sunken dance floor, view west from main stage towards main entrance and west bar.

**Photo 35**

West bar, view west.

**Photo 36**

South bar, view south.

**Photo 37**

VIP area with bar, view south.

**Photo 38**

Interior of former barbecue pit with single entry doors, view southwest.

**Photo 39**

Historic mural on interior southwest wall, view west.

**Photo 40**

Gallery area, view south towards restrooms, VIP area and south bar.

**Photo 41**

Gallery area with shadow box display cases, view east towards VIP area.

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## INTERIOR MULTI-USE BUILDING

### **Photo 42**

Former first-floor restaurant, view southeast.

### **Photo 43**

Restaurant bar, view north.

### **Photo 44**

Main entrance to former restaurant, view northwest.

### **Photo 45**

Detail of decorative wall paneling near main restaurant entrance, view west.

### **Photo 46**

Secondary restaurant entry on northeast elevation, view north.

### **Photo 47**

Former first-floor restaurant, view west.

### **Photo 48**

Door from former first-floor restaurant to exterior covered walkway on northeast elevation, view southeast.

### **Photo 49**

First-floor tenant space, view north.

### **Photo 50**

Second-floor tenant space, view southeast.

### **Photo 51**

Second-floor tenant space with new buildout (c. 2023), view west. Note the existing faux window and door infills (left) along the southwest balcony elevation.

### **Photo 52**

Second-floor apartment buildout (c. 2023), view south.

### **Photo 53**

First-floor restaurant tenant space with new buildout (c. 2023), view south.

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

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

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## Narrative Description

The Longhorn Ballroom complex faces northeast toward Corinth Street in an industrial area on the south side of Dallas, Texas. The complex includes two buildings (the ballroom and a multi-use building), one large pylon sign, and is partially enclosed by walls and fences. The property and both buildings are oriented northwest-to-southeast. The Longhorn Ballroom building is a one-story rectilinear building with two sections that project from the rear (northeast) elevation for the kitchen and stage, respectively. It is constructed of brick and concrete-block masonry over a metal frame; the primary (southwest) elevation was originally covered in white stucco but was faced with a wooden false front, designed to look like a row of buildings in an Old West town, during the period of significance. The roof consists of three parallel longitudinal gables. The apartment/restaurant building is a two-story rectilinear building of wood-frame construction, clad with wood siding, brick, and stucco. It features a low-pitched gable roof and second-floor rooms accessed via exterior staircases and galleries on both long elevations. The restaurant portion is clad with stucco and faux stone (c.1986), while the apartment portion is clad with wood. The restaurant faces Corinth Street and occupies approximately one-third of the building. The building complex is partially enclosed by decorative metal fences and gates with a lone star and wagon wheel design, masonry walls decorated to look like Old West building facades, and tall wooden palisade walls. The fences, walls, and gates collectively unify the portion of the property containing the building complex. Approximately two acres of vacant land to the southeast of the building complex is part of the property. The Longhorn Ballroom building, multi-purpose building, and prominent sign retain integrity and collectively communicate the property's architectural and historical significance. The property is currently being rehabilitated following the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (in progress).

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## General Setting

The Longhorn Ballroom complex at 200 Corinth Street in Dallas, Texas was built by O.L. Nelms in 1950 as the Bob Wills Ranch House, a dance hall and restaurant/apartment constructed for Bob Wills and his band, the Texas Playboys. The complex includes the buildings and parking lot owned by Nelms and later purchased by Dewey Groom, as well as approximately two acres of vacant land to the southeast. This property sits at the corner of Corinth Street and S. Riverfront Blvd. (formerly Industrial Blvd) with Corinth Street on the northwest, S. Riverfront Blvd. on the southwest, and adjacent vacant property to the southeast. A portion of the Trinity River's old channel (known locally as a *meander*), the flood plain and levee lie to the east and northeast of the subject property.

The Longhorn Ballroom complex is at the southeastern edge of the historic Cedars neighborhood; the commercial portion of the neighborhood is now known as "Southside," reflecting its location relative to downtown Dallas. The area immediately surrounding the Longhorn Ballroom complex consists of mostly one-story commercial buildings on Corinth Street and S. Riverfront Blvd., including gas stations, convenience stores, smaller industrial and commercial buildings, and several scrapyards, including Atlas Scrap across S. Riverfront; many of these were constructed in the 1960s or 1970s. The Longhorn Ballroom complex is unusual for the area, as it is a relatively large site surrounded by open space, including vacant land (the former site of a post-World War II motor court) to the northwest, city-owned green space and the meander to the northeast, and now-vacant property to the southeast, extending to the levee. Nearby industrial properties include the Big City Crushed Concrete Plant, visible from the Longhorn Ballroom complex. The historic Santa Fe Railroad is located to the east.

## Longhorn Ballroom Complex

The Longhorn Ballroom complex includes two historic buildings that flank a large open parking lot. The large ballroom building is close to the northwest property line, while the second building (which previously housed a record studio, restaurant, and apartment units) abuts the southeast property line at S. Riverfront Blvd. The ballroom building is set farther back from the road than the apartment building; at one time, a gas station occupied Lot 4 of the block, between Corinth Street and the ballroom building, but that property is now vacant. The apartment building is close to the corner of

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Corinth and Riverfront. Site features include a historic brick wall at the northwest property line; a long, metal fence facing Corinth Street; and a metal fence at the southeast property line with metal gates. These walls and the fence, along with the buildings, enclose the complex. The historic “Longhorn Ballroom” sign, over a larger-than-life statue of a longhorn steer with 18-foot-wide horns, is located near Corinth Street, and can be seen from a distance from both Corinth Street and S. Riverfront Blvd. A wooden deck has been built at the edge of the meander, providing access to the edge of the water.

### **Longhorn Ballroom - Exterior**

The entertainment building originally known as the “Ranch House” building was built in 1950 as a three-bay metal-framed building, topped with a low-pitched metal roof featuring triple gables of equal size with parallel longitudinal ridges. The building footprint is 94 feet deep by 244 feet long and covers approximately 23,000 square feet.

#### *Southwest (Primary) Elevation*

The exterior walls of the Longhorn Ballroom were originally clad with smooth stucco and a stone wainscoting that extended along the front façade, with a simple canopy to designate the entrance. The building retained its original appearance until 1968, when Dewey Groom purchased the property from O. L. Nelms and began a renovation project to reinforce a “country-and western” theme.<sup>1</sup> These changes, which still characterize the building, included a cohesive, western appearance for the front façade and the adjacent brick wall by treating both like a stage set and breaking up their long masses with varied materials and murals to create a more inviting visitor experience. The upper areas of the exterior stucco walls were partially re-clad in rough wood vertical board-and-batten siding and coordinated with the location of the new murals.

- Faux windows were installed just below the roofline to create the illusion of a second story; these consist of plywood painted with “interior” details and curtains, behind traditional window trim and frames.
- A series of Western-themed murals and backdrops were painted on the exterior stucco wall and, in some places, extended in height to the underside of the new wood siding at the upper portion of the wall. The murals varied in size, and several were quite large; all of these original murals have been painted over or removed.
- Two new wooden balconies were added at the upper portion of the wall to give the appearance of a second story; these included turned wood columns and X-patterned wood railing and doors, which complimented new Craftsman-style roof details.
- Brick planters were placed in select areas in front of the main façade.

These projects appear to have been undertaken individually over the two years between 1968-1970. Cumulatively, they both provided the Longhorn Ballroom with its iconic western appearance and also created a series of comfortable outdoor spaces for patrons. Today, the gable roof is primarily clad with corrugated metal, although some areas of the roof facing the parking lot are covered in gray asphalt shingles.

#### *Southeast Elevation*

One of the gabled ends of the ballroom building, the southeast elevation is distinguished by a nonhistoric covered patio emergency exit door with metal wagon-wheel security gate and large ducts and air-conditioning equipment, some of which are contained within a metal cage. The gable ends feature board-and-batten wood siding. A small rustic wooden ticket booth is located next to the single-entry door. Electrical conduit and meter boxes, along with HVAC vents, are also located on this elevation.

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<sup>1</sup> “Longhorn: Still Thinking Big,” *Billboard*, Nov. 21, 1970, 64.

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*Northeast Elevation*

This elevation faces the meander of the Trinity River. It is constructed with concrete masonry units on its southeast end and a bump-out for the loading dock and backstage areas. The remainder of this elevation (on the northeast end of the building) is faced with brick. A single-entry door near the east corner of the building on this elevation is the only opening between that corner and the caged covered patio inset beneath the main roof. The patio is accessed through two sets of double doors to the ballroom, as well as a set of steps up to a single-entry door to the backstage area. The bump-out section near the center of this elevation contains a roll-up door for the loading dock behind the stage. The north end of this elevation contains two sets of double doors and two window openings filled with glass blocks that have been painted.

*Northwest Elevation*

The northeast elevation contains several horizontal window openings filled, respectively, with either glass block or stucco-covered masonry. Board-and-batten wood siding fills the three gable ends, over painted brick walls. This elevation is largely obscured from view by the masonry wall and fences along the northeast side of the parking area.

**Longhorn Ballroom – Interior**

The ballroom building features a primary entrance on the west end, and two exits to the east, all of which are accessed through vestibules that extend into the parking lot. Upon entering, visitors pass into a wood-paneled lobby with framed photos of musical artists and a display case with additional photos and memorabilia. Beyond the lobby, one enters the western portion of the open live music area featuring the west bar and restrooms on the north wall. The main kitchen is in the northwest corner of the building. The building's interior is dominated by a large central performance area with a stage along the building's north wall. The bi-level viewing area features the dance floor immediately in front of the stage, surrounded by slightly raised viewing areas. The area behind the stage features small rooms (office, restroom, storage, and two green rooms). The east side of venue features two large restrooms in the northeast corner, a VIP lounge with a large wooden bar, and the smaller south bar in the southeast corner.

While the dining area remains in its original U-shaped location surrounding the dance floor, the dance floor itself was lowered by approximately 24 inches below the floor of the dining area in 1986. To accomplish this, the original wood flooring was removed, the area of the dance floor excavated, a new slab poured, and the historic wood flooring re-installed. This change offers most patrons better views of the performers, the railings at the edge of the dining areas are visually and physically intrusive to those seated near them.

The owners from 2017-2020 made a series of modifications during their tenure. In conjunction with the new entrance to the ballroom, a new lobby and new six-foot-long interior accessible ramp was added, adjacent to the original office space at the northeast corner of the building. The interior walls of this new lobby are made of wood and glass block, with built-in display cases. The new entrance at the western section of the front façade opens into the building's existing circulation pattern with minimal impact. Kitchen areas were slightly modified while remaining within their original footprint. Restrooms were renovated to meet current accessibility standards and provide updated finishes.

**Multi-purpose Building - Exterior**

This two-story building is located at the northeast corner of the Longhorn complex and appears to be on or near the property line at S. Riverfront Blvd. The building first appears in the 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company map of Dallas but its original use and date of construction is unknown. The building can be clearly seen in a 1960 photograph with its extant two-story open balconies at the front and visible sides of the building.<sup>2</sup> The building's long plan and exterior

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<sup>2</sup> This 1960 photograph of a car collision at the intersection of Corinth Street and Industrial Blvd. is the earliest

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balconies indicate that it intended to serve as an apartment building or short-term lodging and reportedly accommodated guests and artists (but not the public) during its early years.<sup>3</sup> During Dewey Groom's management of the Longhorn, the apartment building accommodated his recording studio (Longhorn Records) on the second floor, as well as his offices, storage, and back-of-house functions for the management of the Longhorn Ballroom, and guest suites for artists. First-floor spaces recently accommodated special events, private parties, and VIP functions.

This two-story linear building is approximately 320 feet long by 35 feet wide, with second-floor exterior balconies that originally wrapped three sides of the building but now are extant only on the southeastern and northeastern façades. The brick façade facing Industrial Avenue is painted. The building is wood-frame construction with a brick wall at the northwest façade (adjacent to Industrial Blvd.) that extends above the second floor, forming the balcony wall at this level. The remaining exterior walls are wood-frame construction and appear to have been originally clad with wood siding. The balconies on both sides have a concrete deck, supported by the brick wall below at the southwest façade and by large rustic wood columns at the northwest façade. The second-floor balconies at both sides of the building were previously open, featuring exposed wood rafters with clipped ends that extended approximately two feet from the building and are still visible on the southeast façade. The roof is a simple gable form clad with metal panels. Exterior doors and windows would have been placed at regular intervals at these exterior walls; these remain in place at the first floor of the northwest façade, opening onto the parking area.

While the apartment building has experienced modifications over the years, the dates of most of these changes are unknown. The most significant change enclosed the second floor at the front of the building to create a barnlike appearance with a gambrel roof form; this sometime between 1960 and 1980. Changes to the balconies have included removing or replacing most of the exterior stairs and making the balconies more private via the addition of lattice or solid materials on most of the southwestern elevation (overlooking S. Riverfront Blvd). Areas of the balcony at the northwest elevation also have been closed off and the original doors and windows removed. Portions of both balconies recently have been used for storage. The first-floor exterior corridor has retained many of its original doors and windows, as it has been leased over the years to a variety of tenants, ranging from offices to an architectural salvage company. Many of the exterior windows on the first and second floors remain in place, although they have been covered over with faux windows, similar to those installed in the Longhorn Ballroom.

Raul Ramirez, who operated the popular Mexican restaurant "Raul's" in this building, clad the front façade and an existing three-foot-high wainscoting on the barn portion of the building with manufactured stone during the 2000s. He also added a front porch addition with stone veneer-clad columns, and the same veneer was applied to selected areas of the exterior walls in the first- and second-floor corridors. The last major change to the building was the 2018 addition of two large, covered wooden staircases leading to the second-floor balcony facing the ballroom; these open stairways are built of heavy timber construction, with a roof structure that ties into the building's original roof.

### **Apartment Building - Interior**

The original interior floor plan is unknown, but it appears to have consisted of rooms opening on the first floor from exterior doors to the parking lot, and on the second floor from exterior doors to the balconies on the northeast and southwest sides of the building. Nearly all of the first floor has been modified, with most original rooms combined to form larger spaces; no evidence of original interior hallways remains. Dewey Groom utilized portions of the second floor for his Longhorn Records recording studio, and much of that studio space remains intact. Today, the restaurant takes up much

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photograph found of the area around the Longhorn Ballroom and shows the building at the corner of the intersection. Courtesy of the G. Williams Jones Collection at Southern Methodist University accessed December 3, 2020.

<sup>3</sup> Because Bob Wills built apartments for his band and their families adjacent to his previous ballroom venue in Sacramento, California, in the three years immediately prior to the construction of the Ranch House, it is likely that this building was constructed to serve the same purpose.



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of the front of the building and the space formerly occupied by a kitchen separates the restaurant from the larger spaces at the rear of the building. One of those spaces contains tables, chairs, banquette seating, and shopping carts full of the original wood flooring that was removed from the dance floor after the building flooded. Some decorative wall finishes are also visible in that room. The apartment building also contains a nonhistoric performance space with low platform stage and wooden floor. The second floor contains spaces of various sizes, with a set of men's and women's restrooms near the center of that level. Various single- and double-entry doors, in no regular pattern, provide access to the balconies.

### **Longhorn Ballroom Sign**

The large freestanding "Longhorn Ballroom" sign with its trademark longhorn steer, installed in early 1968, remains the most visible element of Dewey Groom's renovations. The sign rests on a stone base with two posts supporting a barn-shaped "LONGHORN Ballroom" sign and secondary signage (no longer extant) that originally read "SEATS 2,000" and "Top County Stars Weekly." A rectangular marquee used changeable letters to promote upcoming shows. The stone base also supports a larger-than-life longhorn steer, which was repainted in 2017. The sign was designated as a City of Dallas Landmark Sign in 1984 and is currently in good condition.

### **Masonry Wall Adjoining the Ballroom**

A long brick masonry wall adjoining the Longhorn Ballroom is located on the northeast property line. This wall was renovated as part of Groom's 1968-1970 renovation efforts, creating a faux Western street scene that appeared to depict multiple separate buildings. Some sections of the wall are covered with stucco and topped with a shallow Spanish tile roof, while other sections are clad with rough vertical board-and-batten wood panels above stucco; all of the "buildings" in the street scene are decorated with faux window and door openings. This wall completed the enclosure of the parking lot, and its appearance is consistent with the Western theme of the ballroom building. The back side of this wall is exposed brick masonry.

### **Other Site Features**

In addition to the Longhorn Ballroom sign and the wall adjoining the ballroom, other site features at the Longhorn property include the tall, Western-themed metal fence with wagon wheel motifs installed at the front of the site was not present in the 1980 photograph. Large gates of the same design constructed during the 1968-1970 renovation allow the open space to be secured at night. Another set of similarly designed gates (also ca. 1968-1970) are at the southeast limits of the parking lot and extend from the wood fence adjoining the ballroom to S. Riverfront Blvd. These gates allow entrance to the central parking lot from the adjacent vacant property. A tall wooden fence is located at the southwest corner of the Ballroom and extends towards S. Riverfront Blvd, obstructing the view into the open parking area. This fence and the metal gates described above enclose the southeast section of the property.

### **Integrity**

The Longhorn Ballroom building has had few exterior modifications outside the 1950-1978 period of significance; the most notable of these was the recent addition of a new building entrance at the western end of main façade. The interior public spaces within the ballroom (dance floor, stage, dining areas, bars, and circulation spaces) remain in their original locations. While the dance floor is no longer at the same level as it was originally, it retains its direct relationship to the stage, performers, and the surrounding dining area. The building materials at the front façade, including stucco, wood siding and trim, stone surrounds at the doors, metal roof and architectural features (balconies, faux windows) dating from the 1968-1970 renovation are largely intact, with the exception of nonhistoric exterior murals. The heavy timber columns and roof gable elements at the new building entrance are clearly distinguishable from the original building, and since the entryway occupies only about 25 feet of 240-foot-long façade, its adverse effect is limited and does not significantly impact the overall integrity of the building's materials and workmanship. Much of the building's design and feeling

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remain intact without minimal loss of original elements. Based on the high integrity of the existing ballroom building, compared to the minor cumulative effects of the recent changes, the Longhorn Ballroom building retains sufficient integrity of design and feeling. While modifications have been made to the multi-purpose building, the exterior materials either remain in place or are extant beneath later materials. Much of the building's design still reflects its original form and appearance, including the exterior balconies, which are still used as corridors to access the various spaces on the first and second floors.

Several site features retain a good degree of integrity. These include the Longhorn Ballroom sign, the wall with street scenes adjacent to the ballroom, and the metal fence and gates with wagon wheel motifs at the front and back of the complex. In summary, the Longhorn Ballroom complex, including the ballroom building, the apartment building, the Longhorn sign, and masonry walls and metal fences and gates retain a high degree of integrity.

### *Summary of Rehabilitation*

The rehabilitation work for the Longhorn Ballroom and Multi-Use Building began in 2022 as a historic tax credit project; all work meets the Secretary of the Interior's Rehabilitation Standards.

### *Longhorn Ballroom*

The Longhorn Ballroom reopened on March 30, 2023. The building's exterior masonry and wood siding were patched, repaired, and repainted as needed; the primary façade with faux Western murals was retained. Most existing entry doors were retained, though select doors were replaced, modified, or added to meet egress and fire safety code requirements. The historic neon "Longhorn Ballroom" sign, dating to Dewey Groom's ownership between 1968-1986, was discovered in an offsite warehouse. It was refurbished and reinstalled in its original location above the former barbecue pit. A small, non-original CMU-block addition was removed from the building's eastern corner, creating an open-air patio at the easternmost end of the northeast elevation (Photo 9).

The interior scope of work included upgrades to the sunken dance floor to accommodate two ADA-compliance ramps. The dancefloors footprint was expanded and four new access stairs and a metal and wood perimeter railing with drink ledges added. The original wood dance floor was too warped for reinstallation as flooring and salvaged planks were incorporated into the perimeter railing design. Tiered viewing suites were constructed at the southeastern edge of the expanded dance floor and along the southwestern interior wall. The historic interior mural was protected and retained as a feature in the new gallery area. The main stage remains in its original location, and the overall historic circulation pattern and open volume of the performance space were retained. Back-of-house areas and supporting rooms remain concentrated along perimeter walls. The VIP room, bars, restrooms, kitchen, offices, and back-stage greenrooms received updated finishes.

### *Multi-Use Building*

The multi-use building is currently being rehabilitated for mixed use retail, residential, and office use. The expected completion date is Spring 2024. Select doors have been relocated or added to accommodate the reconfiguration of interior tenant spaces. The storefronts for the three small restaurant tenants and one adjacent retail space were modified with new three-panel sliding windows with fixed center panes. The northeast balcony guardrails were replaced with new cedar rails and steel bars, and two narrow metal canopies were installed above ground-level storefronts facing the central parking area. Additional windows are being installed along both second-floor balcony elevations; new windows and doors along the rear (southwest) balcony are being placed in the locations of the existing faux window and door infills to maintain the building's fenestration pattern. The southwest balcony will be divided into smaller, private patios for new apartment and office tenants; the new privacy screens will align with the building's column grid and be installed perpendicular to the elevation. A steel tube guardrail will be installed inside the southwest balcony's existing brick guardrail to raise the height

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from 31" to 42" to meet code requirements. The new railing extensions and privacy screens will be painted a dark, neutral color to minimize visibility and blend into the shadowed balcony space to retain the historic character of the building. A new interior stair will be constructed along the southwest wall of the former restaurant space to provide access to second-floor tenant spaces from Riverfront Boulevard.

*Site*

The historic "Longhorn Ballroom" sign and statue of a longhorn steer remain at the northwest end of the building complex; the missing marquee was replaced with a manual marquee. The masonry wall at the northeast side of the parking area was retained, as were the wagon-wheel and lone star fences/gates and the metal wagon-wheel fence along the Trinity River meander. The parking areas will be restriped. A new, wooden sound attenuation wall was constructed along Riverfront Boulevard, enclosing the vacant land to the southeast of the building complex. The vacant land will be developed into an outdoor concert venue with a stage, drive-in style parking, and concert viewing structures.

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## Statement of Significance

The Longhorn Ballroom complex is nominated to the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of Entertainment and Recreation/Performing Arts at the state level of significance. For much of its nearly 75-year history, the Longhorn Ballroom has been one of the premier music venues in the American Southwest. It presented major artists across wide variety of genres – Western swing, country and western, rhythm and blues, mainstream rock and roll, and punk rock – often mixing these within the same week or even from day to day.

Dallas has a rich history of musical innovation, particularly in the blues music of the Deep Ellum neighborhood, fiddle-based Western swing music, and punk rock. The venues that presented that music, however, have largely come and gone. Of the 84 for-profit music venues (mostly nightclubs or supper clubs) identified as being in business in Dallas during the period of significance (1950–1978), the Longhorn Ballroom is one of 30 confirmed to be extant, one of three still presenting music of any kind, and is the only one still operating as a live music venue. It is the only non-fraternal historic dance hall in Dallas; the Sokol, Sons of Hermann, and SPJST (Slavonic Benevolent Society of Texas) organizations each occupy a lodge hall that sometimes presents music and dancing. The Longhorn Ballroom is also significant for having been racially integrated in the 1950s and early 1960s, hosting African American audiences on Monday and Tuesday nights as well as many headlining African American artists, a practice which reportedly started under the management of Jack Ruby and ran counter to the many nightclubs in segregated Dallas that advertised that they were “For Whites Only.”

Finally, the Longhorn Ballroom played a significant role in the history of punk rock in the United States. The Longhorn Ballroom was one of the seven venues where the Sex Pistols played on their tour of the Southern United States in 1978, a series of events that galvanized the punk movement in the U.S. and influenced the course of music. Additionally, only one other venue from the tour retains its character-defining features as a live music venue: Cain’s Ballroom in Tulsa, Oklahoma, which primarily is known as being “The Home of Bob Wills” from 1935-1942. The period of significance begins in 1950, when the building was constructed and operated as the Bob Wills Ranch House, and continues through 1978, when the Sex Pistols performed their legendary concert at the Longhorn Ballroom. Although the 1978 date is less than 50 years in the past, the influence of the Sex Pistols on multiple genres of American popular music justifies the claim of exceptional significance under Criteria Consideration G, as substantiated by this nomination.

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Dallas, Texas, is the county seat of Dallas County in north central Texas. The city was founded by White/Anglo settlers in 1844 and chartered in 1856, and it quickly became a transportation and economic hub for the region, largely driven by the expansion of railroads throughout the United States. Its physical development was shaped in part by the course of the Trinity River, which flows from northwest to southeast around the southwestern side of downtown. In 2019, the population of Dallas was approximately 2.63 million, making it one of the largest cities in Texas and the United States.<sup>4</sup>

The Longhorn Ballroom complex is located at the corner of Corinth Street and South Riverfront Blvd. (previously known as Industrial Blvd.) within the Cedars neighborhood of South Dallas, fewer than two miles from downtown Dallas. The Cedars neighborhood, established in the 1870s around the city’s first public park, was known as a pleasant and aristocratic residential area close to downtown, with a large Jewish population. Commercial and industrial uses are limited to the southeastern parts of the neighborhood, adjacent to the Trinity River. The Trinity is one of the major rivers in Texas and stretches from the state’s northern border with Oklahoma south-southeast to Trinity Bay, which opens into Galveston Bay and then the Gulf of Mexico. Several Native American tribes, including the Caddo peoples, lived along the river, which was first encountered by European explorers in the late seventeenth century. In Texas’ colonial period and the early Republic, the Trinity functioned as a trading route that enabled Anglo settlement to push into north central Texas; it also was the primary water source for the area. However, like other major rivers in Texas, it was prone to flooding; during a particularly devastating flood in 1908, the river swelled to two miles wide, causing millions of dollars of damage and 11

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<sup>4</sup> Jackie McElhaney and Michael V. Hazel, “Dallas, TX,” *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, [tshaonline.org/handbook](http://tshaonline.org/handbook).

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deaths. The City of Dallas subsequently hired landscape architect George E. Kessler, who had designed the State Fairgrounds, to devise a city plan that included the construction of levees to manage the river. Kessler's work continued from 1911–1919, and in the 1920s and 1930s the \$23.9 million Dallas Floodways project relocated 13 miles of the Trinity River one-half mile west into the middle of the floodplain.<sup>5</sup> Sections of the original river channel near Corinth Street remained as *meanders*, including a slightly curved meander that forms the northeastern edge of the Longhorn Ballroom site.<sup>6</sup>

Flood control measures included the construction of 30-foot-high levees 2,000 feet apart to control the floodplain, as well as several bridges to span the floodplain, including the new Corinth Street Viaduct, which served as an entrance into Dallas from the south, connecting Industrial Blvd. to State Highway 342 in Oak Cliff, which led to Lancaster, Ferris, Ennis and Waxahachie. Ten thousand acres of land were thereby reclaimed from the floodplain, with the new Industrial Boulevard located in the middle, extending from Corinth Street northwest towards downtown Dallas and on to Irving. The property that would become Bob Wills' Ranch House (later known as the Longhorn Ballroom) was part of this reclaimed land. This site was outside the Dallas city limits following the floodway project and was not annexed by the city until the early 1960s.<sup>7</sup>

### History of the Bob Wills' Ranch House/Longhorn Ballroom

Bob Wills' Ranch House (now the Longhorn Ballroom) was built in 1950 by Dallas entrepreneur O. L. Nelms as a headquarters for Western swing bandleader Bob Wills, who managed it for just two years. The venue then cycled through a series of managers, including Douglas "Dewey" Groom, before being taken over permanently by Groom in 1959; he purchased the property in 1967 and operated it as the Longhorn Ballroom until 1986. Ira Zack bought the Longhorn Ballroom business and property in 1986 and operated it for a decade before selling it in 1996 to Raul and Rosalinda Ramirez, who were operating Raul's Corral in the second building on the property. Ramirez offered the ballroom for sale in 2001, and offered it only occasionally for concerts or special events before being purchased by Jay LaFrance in 2017. A family-run event business planned for the space never materialized, however, and concert promoter Edwin Cabaniss bought the Longhorn Ballroom complex and adjacent land in 2022.

#### *O. L. Nelms*

Flamboyant Dallas businessman Ocie Lee (O. L.) Nelms (1907–1972) was born in Waxahachie, Texas, and got his start as an entrepreneur selling hominy door-to-door at the age of eight. He left school after the third grade and went to work peddling fruit. Nelms met and married Lillian Dunfield in Dallas in 1929; he was a carpenter and she was a waitress. His first entrepreneurial venture was a diaper service, but the couple found success in the wholesale trade, with Lillian keeping the books for their businesses. The ~~Nelmses~~ couple owned a tobacco distributorship (Nelms Wholesale Tobacco Company) by 1933, added a vending machine business (the Million Item Company) by 1947, and expanded into the wholesale candy business in the 1960s. As a sales gimmick, O. L. Nelms would hand out cigars with "Help O.L Nelms Make a Million Dollars" printed on the band. Later, after achieving that goal, Nelms began placing daily advertisements in Dallas newspapers and on billboards, saying "Thanks for Helping O. L. Nelms Make a Million Dollars" and then "Thanks for Helping O. L. Nelms Make Another Million Dollars." According to his obituary, "He said he thought it would be impolite not to say 'thank you'." Nelms made most of his money in real estate and construction, developing the Dorchester House apartments at 911 St. Joseph Street, where he ran his businesses out of one of the apartment units; the still-extant Pleasant Grove Shopping Center (built between 1950–1954 and also known as the Southeast Shopping Village

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<sup>5</sup> John N. Furlong, P.E.; Greg Ajemian, P.E.; and Ms. Tommie McPherson, P.E., "History of the Dallas Floodway, presented at the Fall 2003 meeting of the American Society of Civil Engineering (ASCE).

<sup>6</sup> Remnants of re-aligned rivers are known by several names including ox-bow lakes, cutoffs, resacas, and *meanders* – the term commonly used in Dallas.

<sup>7</sup> Furlong, et al.

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and Buckner Park Shopping Center) at 1515 Buckner Boulevard; and the still-extant 1955 Yello-Belly Drag Racing Strip at 4702 East Main Street in Grand Prairie, Texas. Mid-1950s Dallas city directories also show the Million Item Company located at the corner of Corinth and Industrial, suggesting that Nelms used the apartment building for that business. Lillian later managed the Oak Manor Motor Hotel on South Central Expressway, which may have been one of their business ventures, in the early 1970s. Nelms was a generous donor, making large gifts to Dallas hospitals, museums, and colleges through the O. L Nelms Foundation, established in 1964.<sup>8</sup> He constructed the two-building complex now known as the Longhorn Ballroom in 1950, naming it the “Bob Wills’ Ranch House.” It is unclear how or for how long Nelms knew Wills prior to their collaboration in this venture; Wills apparently leased the Ranch House and managed that business, as well as appearing with his band, while Nelms both leased and operated his own businesses in the apartment building.

*Bob Wills (1905–1975)*

Bob Wills was born in Kosse, Texas, to a family of musicians, and at age 14 his family moved to Turkey, Texas. Wills led his first country band (the Wills Fiddle Band) in his mid-twenties. His next group, the Aladdin Laddies, became the Light Crust Doughboys under sponsorship of Burris Mills, makers of Light Crust brand flour. Wills expanded the band with a trumpet, saxophone, drum, steel guitars, and an additional vocalist, and added the fiddle to his personal repertoire; the band was subsequently renamed the Texas Playboys.<sup>9</sup>

Over the course of his career, Wills and the band would divide their time between Texas, Oklahoma, and California when not touring. In 1934, Wills and the Playboys relocated from Fort Worth to Oklahoma City and began working regularly in Tulsa. Their first appearance at Cain’s Ballroom (NRHP 2003) took place on New Year’s Eve that year, and soon Wills and the band were playing at Cain’s regularly on Thursday and Saturday evenings; the other four nights were spent touring regionally. Wills also broadcast an hour-long program from those dances at midnight on radio station KVOO, later adding a noon show as well. Their first recording, “Osage Stomp,” was made at the Brunswick Record Corporation in Dallas in September 1935. The larger band gained a strong following and proved popular at dance halls; its fuller sound is now recognizable as an early incarnation of Western swing music, an amalgamation of country, western, jazz, blues, and swing. As their music gained in popularity, the band began to play throughout Texas and Oklahoma, and then began touring across the Southwest, although its home base remained at Cain’s. Along with his business manager, O. W. Mayo, Wills took over the management of Cain’s Ballroom from 1939–1942.<sup>10</sup> The band’s influence spread; Wills’ 1938 single “Ida Reed” reportedly served as a model for Chuck Berry’s hit song “Maybellene.”<sup>11</sup> In 1940, Wills’ composition “New San Antonio Rose” became his signature song with the Texas Playboys.<sup>12</sup>

Wills served in the Army during World War II, from December 1942 to July 1943;<sup>13</sup> during that time, his brother Johnnie Lee took over at Cain’s Ballroom, hosting the radio shows and dances. Following his medical discharge, Wills relocated his operation to California, where he assembled a new band and began to appear regularly at the Mission Beach Ballroom in San Diego.<sup>14</sup> The Texas Playboys developed a new take on Western swing music, to which California audiences responded with enthusiasm, and attendance for the band’s performances at major venues during the mid-1940s exceeded

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<sup>8</sup> “O.L. Nelms Dies; Colorful Rich Man,” *Dallas Morning News*, May 5, 1972, page 3D. Also “Lillian Nelms, widow of colorful millionaire, dies at 86,” *Dallas Morning News*, July 13, 1996, 37A; and Dallas City Directories: 1929, page 1490; 1933, page 1093; 1947, page 865; 1966, page 152; 1970, page 1272.

<sup>9</sup> Charles Townsend, *San Antonio Rose: The Life and Music of Bob Wills*, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 1–2, 27–28, 54, 68–69, 89.

<sup>10</sup> Cynthia Savage, “Cain’s Dancing Academy,” National Register of Historic Places, file number 03000874, 2003; also, Townsend, 113, 123.

<sup>11</sup> Jesse Wegman, “The Story of Chuck Berry’s Maybellene,” NPR, *The NPR 100*, accessed February 15, 2021. “Maybellene” was Chuck Berry’s first single, quickly rising to No. 1 on the Rhythm and Blues charts and No. 5 on the Pop charts in 1950.

<sup>12</sup> Michael Hall, “The Secret History of Texas Music: New San Antonio Rose (1940),” *Texas Monthly*, June 11, 2015.

<sup>13</sup> Townsend, *San Antonio Rose*, 225–228. At the age of 38, Wills was discharged due to not being physically fit enough for the Army.

<sup>14</sup> Savage.

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those of Tommy Dorsey's and Benny Goodman's big-band orchestras.<sup>15</sup> In 1944, the Texas Playboys played at the Grand Ole Opry – the third western swing band to perform there, and the first band to include drums, which the Opry had previously not allowed.<sup>16</sup> The band drew large crowds at nightclubs and dance halls and appeared regularly on radio broadcasts, including KGO in San Francisco, which syndicated the “Bob Wills and His Texas Playboys” radio show.

In 1947, Wills purchased and moved his family to the Triple B Ranch in Fresno, California. He then bought the Aragon Ballroom in Sacramento, California, renaming it “Wills Point,” and added an amusement park, swimming pool, and apartments for his band members and their families. However, their touring schedule made it impossible for the band to establish the same kind of ‘home base’ that they had enjoyed at Cain's in Oklahoma. In 1949, Wills moved to Oklahoma City, but by this time he and the band were touring nationally and rarely home. Within a year, he and the Texas Playboys had moved once again, this time to Dallas.<sup>17</sup>

In 1950, Wills set up a new residency in Dallas at the Bob Wills' Ranch House, a venue built for him by O. L. Nelms, but Wills was unable to recreate the success he had enjoyed at Cain's Ballroom in Tulsa. After a few years, he sold his interest in that business and temporarily dissolved the Texas Playboys. Wills moved back and forth for several years between Wills Point (which he was still managing) and first Houston, then Amarillo (twice), finally settling at Wills Point in 1954. In 1956, he leased the Wills Point business to another operator and moved to Amarillo; the next year, he moved to Abilene and then to Tulsa, where he joined his brother at Cain's. Shortly thereafter, however, his manager booked weeks-long engagements at venues in Las Vegas and Lake Tahoe, and Nevada became his base of operations for most of each year through 1961; in 1962, he split his time between Las Vegas and Tulsa, and in 1963 moved to Fort Worth, Texas. Wills and his band then returned to the road, touring nationally, with occasional performances at the Longhorn Ranch continuing into the 1960s. By that time, though, the entertainment and media industries were changing, and Wills' health was declining; he had a second heart attack in 1964 and dissolved the Texas Playboys in 1965. He appeared with other bands for several more years but stopped working altogether after a stroke in 1969. Wills died in 1975.<sup>18</sup>

Bob Wills' contribution to American music was profound. He has been called the “King of Western Swing,” an up-tempo sub-genre of American country-western dance music that originated in the early 1920s in the American West and was popularized most prominently by Wills and his Texas Playboys.<sup>19</sup> This music attracted huge crowds to dance halls and nightclubs in the 1930s and 1940s, particularly in Texas, Oklahoma and California.<sup>20</sup> Bob Wills was inducted into the Country Music Hall of Fame in 1968, the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1970, and (with the Texas Playboys) the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in the Early Influence category in 1999; he posthumously received the Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 2007.

*Bob Wills' Ranch House, 1950–1952*

In 1950, the Bob Wills' Ranch House opened in a new building that entrepreneur O. L. Nelms built specifically for Bob Wills on the south side of Dallas. The grand opening took place on November 15, 1950, and featured a parade at noon and a two-hour television show that evening on local television station WFAA.<sup>21</sup> Wills and his band were considered the premier Western swing band in the country, and the venue proved to be extremely popular. The Ranch House was at that time (and still is) the largest dance hall in Dallas, accommodating 2,000 people with a large dance floor in the center of

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<sup>15</sup> Townsend, *San Antonio Rose*, 241.

<sup>16</sup> Townsend, *San Antonio Rose*, 102.

<sup>17</sup> Savage.

<sup>18</sup> Savage.

<sup>19</sup> Charles R. Townsend, “Bob Wills,” in *Stars of Country Music: Uncle Dave Macon to Johnny Rodriguez*, ed., Bill C. Malone and Judith McCulloh (Urbana, Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1975), 157, 159-160.

<sup>20</sup> Charles Townsend, “Bob Wills,” in *Stars of Country Music*, 171. Also, Albert Murray, *Stomping the Blues* (Da Capo Press, 2000), page 109–110.

<sup>21</sup> “Grand Opening Tonight,” Advertisement, *Dallas Morning News*, November 15, 1950, 9 of Pt II.

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the room. A second building containing a barbecue restaurant, bar, and retail space was also constructed on the property.<sup>22</sup> The venue was geared to a family crowd; a nursery and play area for children were provided when the club opened. Other unusual features were a 45-foot-long bar with nearly 1,000 silver dollars inlaid into the top surface, stalls for Will's six quarter-horses (including Punkin), and murals of Western scenes on the interior and exterior walls.<sup>23</sup> Wills rode Punkin around the dance floor during shows. He played at the venue six evenings a week (Monday through Saturday) and offered an evening of music, dinner, and dancing. On Sundays, the club opened at 4:30 p.m. and the band went on at 6:30 p.m.<sup>24</sup> Wills' audience at the Ranch House was primarily local, from Dallas, Fort Worth and the surrounding areas, and secondarily regional, from Oklahoma, Louisiana, and further-flung Texas locations. Wills and his band also continued to tour, with other artists playing at the venue in their absence.<sup>25</sup>

As at Cain's in Tulsa, Wills and the band hosted a half-hour weekday radio show from the Ranch House that broadcast on WFAA, and the public was invited to attend, with free admission; they also hosted a Saturday afternoon radio show.<sup>26,27</sup> Like most music venues, the Ranch House hosted a special program on New Year's Eve; admission was \$2.50 plus tax.<sup>28</sup> Although attendance was good, the club suffered financially, possibly due to mismanagement (or dishonesty) by Wills' manager. According to biographer Charles Townsend, Wills went on tour right after the Ranch House opened and came back to a financial situation that led him to sell the rights to many of his songs, including "San Antonio Rose," in order to pay his debts. "Wills never recovered from this financial and legal disaster in Dallas"<sup>29</sup> and he sold the Ranch House business in January 1952.<sup>30</sup>

### *Jack Ruby, 1952*

Jack Ruby (1911–1967) was born Jacob Rubenstein in Chicago, Illinois, the son of Jewish immigrants from Poland. Leaving school after the eighth grade, he worked for many years as a ticket scalper and so-called "hustler," purchasing small items to re-sell at discount prices on the street, with a cart, or door-to-door. He later started a company to sell knick-knacks and novelty items, which he continued while serving in the US Army Air Force in the southern United States during World War II. Following the war, he returned to Chicago.<sup>31</sup>

During the war, Ruby's sister, Eva Grant, had moved to Dallas and opened a restaurant, the Singapore Supper Club (also known as the Singapore Club) with financial assistance from her brothers. In 1947, Jack Ruby moved to Dallas to help Eva manage the club, then took over after she moved out-of-state at the end of that year. Ruby subsequently invested \$14,000 into the club, changed its name to the Silver Spur, and turned it into a Western-themed dance hall. In 1952, Ruby borrowed \$3,700 to purchase the Bob Wills' Ranch House business in a partnership with a former associate, Martin Gimpel.<sup>32</sup> Ruby retained Bob Wills' name on the marquee, but the venue was not financially successful,<sup>33</sup> and he had lost

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<sup>22</sup> This second building looks like an apartment building of that era, and since Wills had built apartments for his band and their families at Wills Point in California, it is possible that the "apartment building" served the same function for Wills and the Texas Playboys in Dallas.

<sup>23</sup> Fairfield Nisbet, "Wills Club Slanted to Family Trade," *Dallas Morning News*, December 15, 1950, 19.

<sup>24</sup> Advertisement, *Dallas Morning News*, November 25, 1950, 8 of Part II.

<sup>25</sup> Savage.

<sup>26</sup> "Wills Opens Radio Show to Public," *Dallas Morning News*, December 18, 1950, 4 of Part III.

<sup>27</sup> "Bob Wills and Playboys Returning to Airlanes," *Dallas Morning News*, November 13, 1950, 11.

<sup>28</sup> Fairfax Nisbet, "Dining and Dancing," *Dallas Morning News*, December 17, 1950, 3.

<sup>29</sup> Townsend, *San Antonio Rose*, 262–263.

<sup>30</sup> Savage.

<sup>31</sup> Elizabeth Salisbury, introduction, *Report of the Warren Commission on the Assassination of President Kennedy*. (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, 1964), 779-793.

<sup>32</sup> *Report of the Warren Commission*, 793–795.

<sup>33</sup> Fairfax Nisbet, "At the Night Spots," *Dallas Morning News*, July 26, 1952, page 6.



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interest in the Ranch House by the summer of 1952.<sup>34</sup> Ruby continued to buy ownership interests in and operate various nightclubs in Dallas, including the Vegas Club, Sovereign/Carousel Club, Hernando's Hideaway, with varying degrees of success, until the time of his arrest for the shooting of Lee Harvey Oswald, who assassinated president John F. Kennedy in Dallas in 1963.<sup>35</sup>

*Dewey Groom's Longhorn Ranch, 1952–1954*

Douglas "Dewey" Groom (1918–1997) was born in Mabank, Texas (southeast of Dallas), and became interested in music as a child, particularly guitar. His family moved to Dallas at the age of 10. In 1941, at the age of 23, he enlisted in the Army and spent his military service in a divisional band, playing in the South Pacific and Australia for 42 months.<sup>36</sup> After the war, Groom returned to Dallas, performing professionally on radio shows and at several area nightclubs; he also formed his own band, Dewey Groom and the Texas Longhorns, a 12-piece ensemble in which he was the lead vocalist. The band performed regionally, including at Jack Ruby's Silver Spur nightclub, and gained exposure on local host Hal Horton's radio shows. In 1950, Groom operated the Bounty Ballroom (also known as the Bounty Club) at the corner of Commerce and Browder Streets in downtown Dallas, where he and his band served as the house band and as backup band for out-of-town performers; when another band was playing at the nightclub, Dewey and the Texas Longhorns often played at other venues.

By late spring in 1952, Ruby approached Groom about managing the Ranch House. In May 1952, advertisements for the Bob Wills' Ranch House declared that it was "Under New Management."<sup>37</sup> Groom "leased the door" of the Ranch House, meaning that he promoted the shows and retained the proceeds from tickets sales, while Ruby and investor Hy Fader managed the bar. Groom changed the name of the venue to the "Longhorn Ranch," after his country-western band, Dewey Groom and the Texas Longhorns.<sup>38</sup> He both managed the club and sang with the band, which served as the house band most nights and as the backup band for solo performers. Groom brought in major headliners to fill the club; for example, in November 1952, Ernest Tubb headlined a one-night performance at the Longhorn with Dewey Groom and the Texas Longhorns. Big band orchestras appearing at the Longhorn included Stan Keaton, Lionel Hampton, and Ralph Flanagan, and rhythm and blues and jazz artists included Bill "Count" Basie (with both his big band and his small jazz combo, in 1953), Billy Eckstine, Ruth Brown, and Henry James, who appeared in 1952 with 3,000 people in attendance. The club was successful, with most performances drawing at least 1,000 attendees, and more on many nights. However, artistic differences between Groom, Ruby, and Hy Fader resulted in the arrangement ending, and Groom and his band left the Longhorn Ranch at the end of 1953, taking the venue name with him.<sup>39,40</sup>

*Plantation Club and the Guthrie Nightclub, 1954–1958*

With a vacant building on his hands again, Nelms found a new tenant for the building: the Plantation Club, also known as the Plantation Catering Club or Plantation Dance Hall, which occupied the building for a year or two.<sup>41</sup> At that time, the Plantation Club's address was given as 410 Corinth.<sup>42</sup> An account of the building's history on the Longhorn Ballroom's

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<sup>34</sup> Statement by Jack Ruby to the FBI, 1964, *Report of the Warren Commission*, 701.

<sup>35</sup> *Report of the Warren Commission*, 795–800. None of Ruby's club buildings are extant.

<sup>36</sup> Paula Bosse, "Dewey Groom and The Longhorn Ballroom," *Flashback: Dallas* website, 2014.

<sup>37</sup> *Dallas Morning News*, May 17, 1952.

<sup>38</sup> Fairfax Nisbet, "At the Night Spots," *Dallas Morning News*, July 26, 1952, page 6.

<sup>39</sup> Bishop, Nancy. "Longhorn Ballroom Owner Marks 25<sup>th</sup> Year," *Dallas Morning News*, October 9, 1983, 1C, 7C. Groom had a falling out with Fader after a robbery at the Ranch House, after hearing rumors that the robbery was staged. Lost in the theft: the silver dollars Bob Wills had inlaid in the Ranch House bar, and several thousand dollars in cash.

<sup>40</sup> Connie Hershorn, "Dewey to Celebrate with Old Music Pals," *Dallas Morning News*, March 21, 1976, 6C. Groom said of Ruby, "Jack wanted an elite Western ballroom. He didn't like the clientele I had; they'd come with their overalls on."

<sup>41</sup> "A Brief History of the Longhorn Ballroom Heritage and Times," no date, Longhornballroom.com.

<sup>42</sup> 1956 Dallas City Directory, page 1500.

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website notes that Nelms then divided the building into two sections,<sup>43</sup> creating the Guthrie Nightclub to the north and the Sadie Hawkins Club, operated by Nelms' secretary, to the south.<sup>44</sup>

*Nelms' Beer Town, 1958–1963*

Another business on the property—Nelms' Beer Town at 200 Corinth Street, at the front of the apartment building at the west side of the property—opened in 1958 and operated until 1963.

*Dewey Groom's Longhorn Ranch, 1959–1967*

After leaving the former Ranch House location on Corinth Street in 1954, Groom moved the Longhorn Ranch nightclub business to a new location at 3000 Main Street in the Deep Ellum neighborhood immediately east of downtown. Groom also worked with his brother Clifton at their Longhorn Barbershop.<sup>45</sup> He purchased the Bridgeport Club at 5610 S. Lamar in 1955 but sold it in 1957.

When the Plantation Club closed in 1958, Nelms again committed to presenting country music as the main focus of the venue. He and Groom discussed relocating the Longhorn Ranch operations back there under Groom's sole management, and reached a lease agreement on December 24, 1958, in which Nelms "sold the rights to operate" the venue to Groom for \$6,000.<sup>46</sup> Groom brought the much needed stability, after eight years of frequently changing operators and names, that the venue needed. Notably, Groom's September 1958 application for a "package store" license to sell beer and "set-ups" (mixers to which patrons could add their own alcohol) noted that the property's license had been suspended due to previous liquor law violations and arrests for drunk and disorderly conduct, minors consuming alcoholic beverages, gaming, disturbing the peace, vagrancy, impersonating a police officer, and an employee carrying a gun inside the business. (After a hearing the following month, the license was granted.)<sup>47</sup>

Groom quickly removed the dividing wall to restore use of the full building, although the Guthrie Club continued to exist in some form and used the Longhorn's space from 1959–1967 for special events.<sup>48</sup> The Guthrie appears to have closed in 1967 and may have re-opened as the Guthrey Club from 1970–1971 at 2005 South Ervay Street.<sup>49</sup>

*The Longhorn Ballroom, 1967–1986*

Groom's business operated under the Longhorn Ranch name through 1966, based on listings in the Dallas City Directory; it appeared under the Longhorn Ballroom name for the first time in 1967.<sup>50</sup> After leasing the building for 10 years, Dewey

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<sup>43</sup> Bishop, Nancy. "Longhorn Ballroom Owner Marks 25<sup>th</sup> Year." Groom says here that Nelms thought the original club was too large to be successful.

<sup>44</sup> 1959 Dallas City Directory, 116; 1960 Dallas City Directory, 122. The 1959 directory lists Nelms' Beer Town, the Plantation Night Club and Guthrie's Nightclub at 200, 212, and 214 Corinth St respectively; the 1960 directory lists only Nelms Beer Town at 200 Corinth and the Longhorn Ranch at 212 Corinth. The Guthrie, or Guthrey, will be listed on Corinth Street again beginning in 1961 until its final listing in the 1968 directory.

<sup>45</sup> Gannaway. Dewey Groom would be part of these family businesses from 1955 to 1959.

<sup>46</sup> Letter from Captain W. F. Gannaway, Dallas Police Department, provided through Lieutenant Jack Revell, Dallas Police Department, re: Criminal Intelligence, Dewey Groom; [www.texashistory.unt.edu](http://www.texashistory.unt.edu).

<sup>47</sup> Dallas Police Department response to Dallas Liquor Control Board, dated September 28, 1958, attachment to letter from Captain W. F. Gannaway, Dallas Police Department, provided through Lieutenant Jack Revell, Dallas Police Department, re: Criminal Intelligence, Dewey Groom; [www.texashistory.unt.edu](http://www.texashistory.unt.edu).

<sup>48</sup> Longhorn Ballroom History; [www.longhornballroom.com](http://www.longhornballroom.com); Dallas City Directories through 1968.

<sup>49</sup> Dallas City Directory, 1970, 100; Dallas City Directory 1971.

<sup>50</sup> Longhorn Ballroom History; [www.longhornballroom.com](http://www.longhornballroom.com); Dallas City Directory, 153

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Groom purchased the property from Nelms in October 1967 for around \$500,000.<sup>51</sup> He installed the site's iconic Longhorn Ballroom sign with its longhorn steer at the front of the property in 1968.<sup>52</sup>

Under Groom's tenure, the Longhorn Ballroom became one of the leading country music venues in the United States and, along with Gilley's in Pasadena (an industrial suburb of Houston), was one of the premier country nightclubs in Texas.<sup>53</sup> During the 1960s, the Longhorn retained its country roots, presenting the top country music performers, including Ernest Tubbs, Hank Williams Jr., Freddy Fender, Johnny Paycheck, Merle Haggard, Conway Twitty, George Jones and Tammy Wynette, Jerry Lee Lewis, Willie Nelson, and Hank Thompson with the Brazos River Boys. Bob Wills and his Texas Playboys also appeared at the Longhorn Ballroom until Wills' health began to decline in the mid-1960s and he dissolved the band.

As country music evolved in the 1970s and 1980s, the Longhorn continued to present established country artists as well as the new generation of "progressive country" musicians and Texas' own "outlaw country" movement, which represented a break from the Nashville-dominated recording business. Willie Nelson and the Texas Outlaws, Waylon Jennings, and Jerry Jeff Walker all appeared at the Longhorn Ballroom during this time. Ray Price and Charley Pride frequently played there,<sup>54</sup> and Groom's son Doug reported that Pride held the records for highest attendance at the venue.<sup>55</sup> The Longhorn Ballroom also presented rhythm and blues and soul artists during this period. In a November 6, 2008, article for the *Dallas Observer*, former employee Jeff Liles writes:

Longtime Dallas music promoter Angus Wynne remembers when it was the premier showcase room for the contemporary rhythm and blues artists of that era. "During the late '60s and early '70s, I used to go see all of the great soul shows at the Longhorn Ballroom on Sunday and Monday nights," Wynne recalls. "Most of the Black community in Dallas at the time worked in the service industry, so Sunday and Monday nights were their nights to go out on the town. I saw James Brown there, Otis Redding, performers like that. It was the coolest place to see a show, because once you got inside, there was no law. People were smoking reefer; they brought their own booze. You could do whatever you wanted, as long as you didn't fight anybody." The venue kept two off-duty African American police officers on hand for a lot of these shows, but they weren't there to arrest anybody—just to keep the peace. The Longhorn was also way ahead of the curve when it came to personalized table service. "You would go in there and buy a table and they would set it up for you," says Wynne. "And that was your table all night; they would serve you setups because they didn't have a liquor license. It was just beer and wine. There were inexhaustible jars of pickled pigs' feet on the bar, and the soul food there was just tremendous. And there was a craps table set up in the men's room. I'm tellin' ya, it was something else!" Wynne actually got a foot in the backstage door to the "chitlin' circuit" by developing a relationship with the club's talent buyer at the time. "John Henry Branch was the booking agent that I actually learned from," Wynne says. "He was an African American man who had nine fingers and one eye. John Henry had an office in the Empire Room down on Hall Street—it was called the Branch Agency. That's where I learned firsthand what promoting shows was all about." Wynne saw Branch nurturing a specific entertainment niche that transcended the

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<sup>51</sup> Jim Stephenson, "Buyer Nelms in Seller's Role," *Dallas Morning News*, October 22, 1967, page 1.

<sup>52</sup> *Dallas Morning News*, January 31, 1969, page 16.

<sup>53</sup> Heather Milligan, "Gilley's," *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, 2006, 2015.

The original Gilley's in Pasadena, Texas, operated from 1970–1989; the building was destroyed in a fire in 1990. Subsequent Gilley's saloons and/or restaurants have opened in Las Vegas at the New Frontier Hotel and Casino (1999–2007), Treasure Island Casino in Las Vegas (2010–present), Dallas (2003–present), Choctaw Casino Resort in Durant, Oklahoma, (2012–present) and In Branson, Missouri (1989–present).

<sup>54</sup> Bishop, Nancy, "Milsap Ignites Dynamite Show," *Dallas Morning News*, November 7, 1980, 6C. At a Ronnie Milsap performance in 1980, Charlie Pride surprised Milsap on stage and was enticed to sing "Kiss An Angel Good Morning" to an audience that clamored for more before Pride joined the audience to watch the show.

<sup>55</sup> Michael Hoinski, *Texas Monthly*.

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conflicted race dynamic at the time; the Longhorn Ballroom seemed to exist in a vacuum of aesthetic desegregation. “John Henry had worked with Ray Charles—first as a musician, then as a touring road manager. He brought Ray here and they lived in Oak Cliff for a while,” Wynne says. “And for some reason, John Henry just really took a shine to me. He introduced me to everybody who came through the Longhorn. It was the last place that you could see an act like Ray Charles, Little Milton or Johnny ‘Guitar’ Watson before they moved on to the bigger rooms.” Years later, international acts like King Sunny Ade, Burning Spear, and Los Lobos also performed at the Longhorn.<sup>56</sup>

Dewey Groom also used the apartment building on the Longhorn Ballroom property as an extension of his Longhorn Records label, which was officially located at his home address on Fonville Road. The apartment building housed a recording studio and may have been used to offer accommodations to musicians and bands booked at the ballroom. Only scant information is available about this building but, despite its appearance, it does not appear to have been used at any time as a motel that served the public.

*Sagebrush Lounge, 1967–1975*

Housed in the apartment building, the Sagebrush Lounge at 200 Corinth appeared in the Dallas City Directories during the middle of Dewey Groom’s tenure as the owner.

*Sex Pistols, January 10, 1978*

Probably the most famous (or infamous) show at the Longhorn Ballroom was the Sex Pistols’ appearance in January 1978. The Sex Pistols, a punk rock band from London, England, are credited with heavily influencing both the British punk movement and punk rock in the United States. Their show at the Longhorn has been described as “one of the strangest, most contentious shows in one of the strangest, most contentious tours in US history.”<sup>57</sup> Details of the event and associated contexts that support Criteria Consideration G are at the end of this section.

*Longhorn Ballroom, 1986–present*

Groom sold the Longhorn Ballroom in April 1986 to Ira Zack, who also owned the Belle Starr, a nightclub that catered to the glitzy country-western dance scene made popular by the 1980 film *Urban Cowboy*. Zack immediately made major changes to the Ballroom, including creating a sunken dance floor in front of the stage, painting over the original interior and exterior murals, and removing the ceiling and other features to give the interior a more industrial look. Under Zack’s management, Jeff Liles was hired to book artists at the venue.<sup>58</sup> The Longhorn expanded its offerings to include a wider spectrum of musical artists and genres, including rock, punk, and heavy metal acts; George Thorogood and the Destroyers, the Red Hot Chili Peppers, the Ramones, the Flaming Lips, and Megadeth all played at the Longhorn, which also continued to present traditional and alternative country performers. Liles took an interest in local bands as well, helping them to make the transition from Deep Ellum clubs to larger venues. Zack had reportedly amassed a large amount of debt during the renovations, and he committed suicide in October 1986.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Jeff Liles, “Echoes and Reverberations: The Ghosts of the Longhorn Ballroom,” *Dallas Observer*, November 6, 2008. Online at <https://www.dallasobserver.com/music/echoes-and-reverberations-the-ghosts-of-the-longhorn-ballroom-7048753>.

<sup>57</sup> Coy Prather, “Miles and Miles: The Longhorn Ballroom,” *Music Magazine*, July 13, 2014, [txmusic.com](http://txmusic.com).

<sup>58</sup> Jeff Liles, “Echoes and Reverberations: The Ghosts of the Longhorn Ballroom,” *Dallas Observer*, November 6, 2008. Online at <https://www.dallasobserver.com/music/echoes-and-reverberations-the-ghosts-of-the-longhorn-ballroom-7048753>. Liles remains in Dallas today as artistic director for the Kessler Theater.

<sup>59</sup> Liles, “Ghosts of the Longhorn Ballroom.”

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Zack's estate sold the Ballroom to Alford Longhorn Properties, Inc. in September 1987.<sup>60</sup> The property at that time consisted of Lots 1–3 and 5–15 in Block 76/7345 of the W.S. Beatty Survey, Abstract 57; the following year, Alford added Lot 16 and the west 50 feet of Lot 17 to the property.<sup>61</sup>

In 1996, Raul and Rosalinda Ramirez purchased the property and installed several retail operations, including Raul's Corral Mexican Restaurant, a Mexican-style mercado on weekends, an architectural salvage company, and other retail enterprises. The Longhorn also hosted occasional concerts, including Tejana star Selena. The Ramirezes-owners put the venue up for sale in 2001 and eventually sold it in 2017.

In 2017, S&D Longhorn Partners, LLC, owned by Jay LaFrance, purchased the building; made selected upgrades to the public areas, dance hall, and bar; and began presenting country music events as well as hosting private parties. The company later filed for bankruptcy and was declared insolvent.

In 2022, Dallas concert promoter Edwin Cabaniss purchased the Longhorn Ballroom. Cabaniss, who also owns the successful Kessler Theater in Dallas (NRHP 2014) and the Heights Theater in Houston (NRHP 2017), revitalized both of those venues and brought them back into productive use through the federal and state historic tax incentive programs. His company, Kessler Presents, is one of the largest independent concert promoters in the United States.<sup>62</sup>

### State Significance under Criterion A for Entertainment and Recreation

The Longhorn Ballroom complex is nominated to the National Register under Criterion A in the area of Entertainment and Recreation at the state level of significance. For much of its nearly 75-year history, the Longhorn Ballroom has been one of the premier music venues in the American Southwest. It presented major artists across wide variety of genres – Western swing, country and western, rhythm and blues, mainstream rock and roll, and punk rock – often mixing these within the same week or even from day to day. The Longhorn Ballroom's significance is based on three factors:

- Dallas has a rich history of musical innovation, particularly in the blues music of the Deep Ellum neighborhood, fiddle-based Western swing music, and punk rock. The venues that presented that music, however, have largely come and gone. Of the 84 for-profit music venues (mostly nightclubs or supper clubs) identified as being in business in Dallas during the period of significance (1950–1978), the Longhorn Ballroom is one of 30 extant, one of only four still presenting music in any form, and is the only one still operating as a live music venue. It is also the only non-fraternal historic dance hall in Dallas; the Sokol, Sons of Hermann, and SPJST (Slavonic Benevolent Society of Texas) organizations each occupy a lodge hall that sometimes presents music and dancing.
- The Longhorn Ballroom is also significant for hosting African American audiences on Monday and Tuesday nights in the 1950s and early 1960s, as well as many headlining African American artists, a practice which reportedly started under the management of Jack Ruby. During that Dallas police were known to raid clubs serving mixed-race audiences.
- The Longhorn Ballroom is significant at the state level due to its role in the history of punk rock in Texas and the United States. Of the seven venues that were part of the Sex Pistols tour of the Southern United States in 1978, which galvanized the punk movement in the U.S. and influenced the course of rock music, the Longhorn Ballroom is one of three still extant, and only one other venue from the tour retains its character-defining features

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<sup>60</sup> Four separate transactions completed the property transfer, per the Dallas County deed records. They are recorded in vol. 871 86, pages 34–35, 36–37, 38–39, and 40–43.

<sup>61</sup> Dallas County deed records, vol. 88096, pages 4570–4574.

<sup>62</sup> Bryan Kirk, "Edwin Cabaniss," *Hillviews Magazine*, Texas State University, 2019, hillviews.txstate.edu.

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as a live music venue: Cain's Ballroom in Tulsa, Oklahoma, which coincidentally was known as "The Home of Bob Wills" from 1935-1942.

The period of significance begins in 1950, when the building was constructed and operated as the Bob Wills Ranch House, and continues through 1978, when the Sex Pistols performed their legendary concert at the Longhorn Ballroom. Although the 1978 date is less than 50 years in the past, the influence of the Sex Pistols on American popular music justifies the claim of exceptional significance, as substantiated by this nomination.

### Music Venues in Dallas, 1950–1978

Dance halls have dotted the Texas landscape since the nineteenth century and are partially responsible for the development of uniquely Texas musical genres, including conjunto/norteño, Western swing, outlaw country, and Texas country music. Although a large number of historic Texas dance halls remain in and are often associated with the Hill Country of Central Texas, these venues are extant throughout the state, with the exception of East Texas, where the predominant Southern Baptist religion traditionally discouraged, if not forbade, both drinking and dancing. In urban areas like Dallas, two fraternal lodge halls — the 1911 Sons of Hermann Hall (3414 Elm Street) in Deep Ellum and the Sokol Hall (7448 Greenville Avenue) — are still standing, while SPJST #86 (the *Slovanska Podporujici Jednota Statu Texas*, or Slavonic Benevolent Order of Texas), previously at 2625 Floyd Street, recently has been demolished. The Longhorn Ballroom is the only other historic Texas dance hall remaining in the City of Dallas.

Dallas has a significant musical heritage that extends back to its early days. In particular, the historically African American neighborhood of Deep Ellum, a mile east of downtown Dallas, developed a thriving entertainment scene with theaters, jazz and blues clubs, street performers, and vaudeville houses. The 508 Park Avenue music studio hosted seminal blues guitarist Robert Johnson in 1937 and was used by Decca Records from 1940–1960 to produce records by pioneering artists including Bob Wills (Western swing) and Lolo Cavazos and José Almeida (conjunto).<sup>63</sup> From the late 1940s to the 1970s, Dallas' live music scene attracted nationally famous musicians and also catapulted local musicians to the forefront of Texas music. The Longhorn Ballroom was one of the most successful venues on the country music circuit during this time and, just down the road, the popular barn dance and radio program *Big D Jamboree* featured an array of nationally known performers including Johnny Cash, Elvis Presley, Merle Haggard, Ray Price, and Hank Williams.<sup>64</sup>

The Longhorn Ballroom is a rare example of an extant venue in Dallas that operated throughout the last half of the twentieth century. According to Dallas City Directories and advertisements in the *Dallas Morning News* published during the Longhorn Ballroom's period of significance (1950–1978), at least 84 other musical venues (mostly nightclubs or supper clubs) were operating in Dallas. Thirty of those venues are confirmed to be extant, and of those, only three are still bars or dance clubs featuring recorded music played by DJs: the Log Tavern (now La Luna, at 3710 Samuell, a bar); the Bridgeport Club (now U.T.B Club, at 5610 S. Lamar), and the "It'll Do" Club at 4322 Elm Street. The Century Room in the Adolphus Hotel at 1321 Commerce is also extant but is a club within a hotel, not a freestanding music venue. The Longhorn Ballroom is the only venue identified from the period of significance that is still in operation as a live music venue.

The Longhorn Ballroom is also one of several venues in Texas that were owned or managed by the musicians who played there. The Longhorn was originally established as Bob Wills' Ranch House—a headquarters for Wills and his band, the Texas Playboys—where Wills was known to ride his horse Punkin on the dance floor. Later, musician/owner Douglas "Dewey" Groom fronted the house band, the Texas Longhorns, for many years. Hoyle Nix—a friend of Wills,

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<sup>63</sup> Alan Govenar and Jay Brakefield. *The Dallas Music Scene 1920s–1960s*. Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2014, introduction; Cary Darling, "Step into Dallas' historic 508 Park Building, now becoming Encore Park," Fort Worth Star-Telegram, March 4, 2015, star-telegram.com.

<sup>64</sup> Cathy Brigham, "Big D Jamboree," *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, tshaonline.org.

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“connoisseur of Western swing,” and renowned musician in his own right—opened The Stampede dance hall in Big Spring in 1954, which his son Jody Nix owns and manages as a home base for his band, the Texas Cowboys, today.<sup>65</sup> The Vrazel Polka Band managed and broadcast a weekly radio show featuring their own performances from the SPJST Lodge No. 15 Hall in Buckholts, Texas, from 1957-1971.<sup>66</sup> And in San Marcos, the late Kent Finlay established the Cheatham Street Warehouse in 1974 as an incubator of Texas music where he nurtured countless musicians over the years, including George Strait and the Ace in the Hole Band (starting in 1975, when Strait was a local college student) and Stevie Ray Vaughan, starting in 1980. Following Finlay’s death in 2018, Cheatham Street Warehouse was purchased and is still owned and managed by Randy Rogers, himself a successful professional singer-songwriter.<sup>67</sup>

### **African American Jazz, Rhythm & Blues, and Soul**

In addition to its historic ties to country music, the Longhorn Ballroom is significant for its association with Dallas’ African American community. Dallas has long been home to a flourishing African American music scene. In Deep Ellum, a neighborhood a mile east of downtown Dallas, a thriving entertainment district developed in the 1920s with Black-owned theaters and music venues. The city was rigidly segregated for much of its early history, but in Deep Ellum, White and Black residents mingled relatively freely. The area began to decline during the Great Depression.<sup>68</sup>

During segregation, Dallas police often threatened to shut clubs down if the owners allowed White patrons to mix with Black patrons. African American clubs scheduled “White only” nights where Caucasian audiences could see their favorite non-Caucasian performers.<sup>69</sup> Conversely, White-owned venues often featured African American performers but did not allow them to mix with customers.<sup>70</sup> The reclaimed floodplain where the Longhorn Ballroom is located was outside Dallas’ city limits in the early 1950s, however, and current owner Edwin Cabaniss theorizes that that allowed the venue more freedom to welcome Black audiences. A September 30, 1954, photo shows singer Nat King Cole performing there to African Americans, who were seated directly in front of the stage while White guests stood in a roped-off area to the side (Figure X). It would have been one of the venues where Black touring musicians were booked for one or two nights before moving on to their next stop on what is now sometimes known as the “chitlin’ circuit,” a term popularized by singer Lou Rawls in the mid-1960s.<sup>71</sup> Along with Don Robey’s Bronze Peacock and the Eldorado Ballroom (NRHP 2021) in Houston, the Victory Grill in Austin, and the Keyhole Club in San Antonio, the Longhorn Ballroom was one of the Dallas venues that booked and promoted Black performers in the segregated South.

At some point, Ranch House/Longhorn operators opened the ballroom on Monday and Tuesday nights to outside promoters who brought in Black jazz and rhythm & blues musicians — a practice which continued through the 1960s and morphed into soul nights on Sundays and Mondays in the 1970s. Artists including Lionel Hampton, Nat King Cole, Al Green, Otis Redding, Ray Charles, B.B. King, James Brown, and Bobby “Blue” Bland (who Rolling Stones frontman Mick Jagger came to see one night in the 1970s) were all frequent entertainers. Local legends like Bobby Patterson and Stax Records artist Johnny Taylor recorded live albums either in Dewey Groom’s Longhorn Records studio or in the Longhorn Ballroom itself.

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<sup>65</sup> Mary Helen Specht, “An Iconic Dance Hall in Big Spring Hosts and Eclectic Crowd,” *Texas Highways*, July 31, 2019.

<sup>66</sup> Theresa Parker, “Alfred Vrazel: Humble Man with a Love of Polka,” *Polka Beat*, January 14, 2015.

<sup>67</sup> Laurie E. Jasinski, “Cheatham Street Warehouse,” *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, 2006, 2018, [tshaonline.org](https://tshaonline.org).

<sup>68</sup> Alan Govenar and Jay Brakefield., *The Dallas Music Scene 1920s–1960s* (Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing), 2014, page 9.

<sup>69</sup> Paula Bosse, “1710 Hall: The Rose Room/The Empire Room/The Ascot Room — 1942-1975,” *Flashback: Dallas* website, accessed June 3, 2021, [flashbackdallas.com](https://flashbackdallas.com).

<sup>70</sup> Govenar and Brakefield, 26.

<sup>71</sup> Tanya Ballard Brown, “The Origin (and Hot Stank) of the ‘Chitlin’ Circuit’,” NPR.org, February 16, 2014, <https://www.ktep.org>.



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Country star Charley Pride was one of the first Black entertainers to cross over to weekend performances at the Longhorn Ballroom for integrated audiences; he was consistently selling out shows by the late 1960s. Groom noted that Pride was the club's most popular performer and reportedly encouraged him to play whenever he wanted.

**Criteria Consideration G: Exceptional Significance for Association with the 1978 Sex Pistols Tour and its Influence on American Music**

The Longhorn Ballroom meets Criteria Consideration G, with a period of significance extending to 1978, in recognition of the legendary January 1978 performance by the Sex Pistols, one of only seven shows played on their sole U.S. tour. The Longhorn Ballroom is one of only three extant venues in the United States where the Sex Pistols performed, along with Randy's Rodeo in San Antonio, and Cain's Ballroom in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The Longhorn Ballroom and Cain's Ballroom are still operating as music venues, while Randy's Rodeo (now Randy's Bingo & Ballroom) currently operates a bingo hall and event rental venue. The 1978 tour influenced the course of American music through concert attendance by current and future musicians, and the sensationalistic nationwide media coverage that brought punk rock from obscurity to the attention of a large segment of the American public.

*American Origins of Punk Rock*

American punk rock was influenced by the post-British Invasion garage bands of the 1960s, avant-garde bands such as the Velvet Underground, and the proto-punk and glam rock bands that followed in the early 1970s. Punk emerged as a reaction to mainstream rock and its increasingly complex instrumentation and production. The movement emphasized a non-professional approach to making music, diminished reliance on virtuosity, and often produced short, fast-paced songs with political, anti-establishment, and anti-consumerist lyrics.<sup>72</sup>

The term "punk rock" was first published in the *Chicago Tribune* in March 1970, quoting ex-Fugs bandleader Ed Sanders describing his new solo album. Writer and musician Lenny Kaye, who later joined the Patti Smith Group, used the term to describe the 1960s garage rock celebrated in his 1972 "Nuggets" compilation album, which itself is often cited as an influence on punk rock artists.<sup>73</sup> Rock critics Lester Bangs and Dave Marsh, among others, used the term to describe loud and metallic proto-punk bands such as the Stooges and MC5 (both from the Detroit area). Debuting in late 1971, the New York Dolls further stretched the boundaries of rock by transforming the musical swagger of the Rolling Stones and aural assault of Iggy Pop and the Stooges while the all-male line-up performed in women's clothing purchased at thrift stores.

While diverse musical acts inspired by proto-punk bands appeared in larger American metro areas such as Los Angeles, Washington, Cleveland, and Boston, the New York scene, centered on the lower Manhattan nightclubs CBGB's and Max's Kansas City, was particularly influential in the U.S. and beyond. The scene was highlighted in New York's *Punk* magazine beginning in 1975, and gained increasing coverage in national music publications such as *Creem* and *Rolling Stone*. New York bands often associated with punk, including Television, the Patti Smith Group, Blondie, Talking Heads, and the Ramones represented a broad variety of influences and styles, indicating that the "punk" moniker was commonly applied to the anti-establishment and often abrasive attitude of the scene in general and not to a particular approach to music or fashion. Richard Hell (formerly of the band Television), is often credited with the cropped, ragged hair style, ripped T-shirts, and black leather jackets that became the basis for punk rock's signature visual style, and his song "Blank Generation" became an anthem for the scene. California also had a particularly robust and eclectic multi-city punk movement beginning in the mid-1970s, with a musically eclectic mix of experimental music, hardcore, new wave, punk-funk, and punk-edged rockabilly.

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<sup>72</sup> John H. Slate, "Punk Rock," *Handbook of Texas Online*, tshaonline.org.

<sup>73</sup> Robinson, J. P. "The Rotten Etymology of Punk." *Medium* (blog), January 31, 2021. <https://jprobinson.medium.com/the-rotten-etymology-of-punk-86db2fcc16f8>.



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*Sex Pistols and the Emergence of Punk in England*

Punk empresario Malcolm McLaren (1946-2010) is the connecting thread between the New York scene and the emergence of English punk in its most visual and fully realized form of the Sex Pistols. An artist, clothes designer, and boutique owner, McLaren attended a number of British art colleges in the 1960s, becoming enamored with the radical Situationist International movement and a related UK group called King Mob, both of which promoted absurdist art and provocative actions as a way of enacting social change. In 1971, McLaren opened a shop on Kings Road in Chelsea, London, selling records, refurbished 1950s record players, and vintage clothing and facsimiles made by his girlfriend Vivienne Westwood. In 1973, McLaren and Westwood participated in the National Boutique Fair in New York, where they began an association with the New York Dolls, supplying them with stage clothes and following them on tour in the UK and France. In 1975, as the Dolls were in decline as a group, McLaren served as an informal manager and, with Westwood, outfitted them in matching red patent leather and designed a provocative Soviet hammer-and-sickle stage motif for their U.S. shows. The remaking of the Dolls was derided as desperate by many fans, and with two members suffering drug addiction, the group broke up soon thereafter. McLaren returned to Britain, inspired by the new scene he had witnessed in New York.

McLaren's King's Road store, renamed SEX in 1974, built a reputation with outrageous clothing inspired by fetish wear, T-shirts bearing provocative nude imagery and anarchist slogans, transparent plastic jeans, and heavily zippered jackets and bleached and dyed shirts adorned with Karl Marx patches. In 1975 guitarist Paul Cook and drummer Steve Jones approached McLaren requesting sponsorship for their band "The Strand." Both were fans of the Faces, Mott the Hoople, and New York Dolls, and had played together since 1973. McLaren became their manager and creative director, and proposed that his shop assistant Glen Matlock join as the bass player. In search of a lead singer, McLaren, determined to bring the New York scene to London, tried to lure Richard Hell (in the early stages of heroin addiction) or Sylvain Sylvain (of the New York Dolls) to join his group, now dubbed "Kutie Jones and his Sex Pistols."<sup>74</sup> McLaren convinced another customer, John Lydon, to audition for the role of lead singer. Despite having no previous experience as a vocalist, McLaren saw Lydon (dubbed "Johnny Rotten") as an appropriate front man, impressed by his green hair, torn clothes, and the words "I hate" scribbled on a Pink Floyd t-shirt. Lydon, like his bandmates, were of the British working class, and later described the social context in which the band came together:

Early seventies Britain was a very depressing place. It was completely run-down, there was trash on the streets, total unemployment—just about everybody was on strike. Everybody was brought up with an education system that told you point blank that if you came from the wrong side of the tracks...then you had no hope in hell and no career prospects at all.<sup>75</sup>

McLaren envisioned the Sex Pistols as central players in a new youth movement mixing radical politics with pop history, outfitted in gear sold at his shop. McLaren also sought to generate turmoil within the band itself as a creative mechanism. The group played its first gig in November 1975, and the following February 1976, the band received its first significant press coverage in England. Encouraged by McLaren's provocative showmanship, guitarist Steve Jones declared that the Sex Pistols were into "chaos" and the band often provoked its crowds into near-riots. The Sex Pistols were soon playing larger venues, including the 100 Club, and former jazz club which soon became primary location for the London punk scene. Their June 4 performance at the Lesser Free Trade Hall in Manchester fueled a particularly noteworthy punk rock boom in that city, with a large number of audience members forming bands of their own.<sup>76</sup> The Pistols soon developed

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<sup>75</sup> Jon Savage, *England's Dreaming*, Main edition (S.I.: Faber & Faber, 2021), 108-112.

<sup>76</sup> The small crowd (perhaps as few as 40 attendees), included: Howard Devoto and Pete Shelley (Buzzcocks); Ian Curtis, Bernard Sumner and Peter Hook (Joy Division); Mark E. Smith (the Fall); Steven Patrick Morrissey (the Smiths), and Tony Wilson (founder of Factory Records).

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into a fairly tight and raucous live band, and in October 1976 signed to major label EMI for a two-year contract. Their first single, "Anarchy in the U.K." was released in November 1976 and firmly established English punk as a political medium. Lydon later noted the until that time, anarchy was "mind games for the middle class, something that university students would dabble with between lunch breaks. I just chucked it out there into the wonderful world of pop."<sup>77</sup>

On December 1, 1976, the band members appeared on the Today show, hosted by Bill Grundy on Thames Television. Appearing as last-minute replacements for Queen, the Pistols and their punk entourage sat for an interview with the host, who proceeded to goad them until Rotten and Jones voiced some profanity on the live broadcast. The ensuing furor occupied the British tabloid newspapers for days, making the band and its members household names throughout the country, and bringing punk into mainstream awareness elsewhere, including the U.S. This was followed by an incident at Heathrow Airport, where the band allegedly "vomited and spat their way" to a flight at the start of a European tour, precipitating the cancellation of gigs, and the band's expulsion from their record deal.<sup>78</sup> Again, the news remained in the British headlines for days, while the story made its way into the U.S. press via wire services. In February 1977, original bassist and key songwriter Glen Matlock was replaced by Rotten's friend Sid Vicious (John Simon Ritchie), who despite not being proficient at his instrument, became a prominent public representation of punk, especially as his association with the Sex Pistols and his heroin addiction led to progressively more self-destructive behavior.

The band released its second single, "God Save the Queen," in time for Queen Elizabeth's Silver Jubilee in May 1977. The lyrics "God save the queen, she ain't no human being, and there's no future in England's dreaming" disparaged the queen and the monarchy in general, prompting widespread outcry nationwide. Despite being banned by the BBC, refusal by major retailers to sell the record, and the band's name being blacked out on published sales charts, the record reached number 2 in England and sold more than 150,000 copies within a week and a half after release. The Sex Pistols issued four singles in the U.K. between November 1976 and October 1977, all of which appeared on the group's only album, *Never Mind the Bollocks, Here's the Sex Pistols*, in November 1977. The only official release by the Sex Pistols in the U.S., the album reached number 106 on the Billboard 200 charts.<sup>79</sup>

#### *1978 Tour of the United States*

Plans for a U.S. tour began in the fall of 1977, when Rory Johnston of Wartoke Concern, who managed Patti Smith and John Cale, met with Premier Talent in New York on behalf of the group. Malcolm McLaren had initially proposed a Texas-only tour to Warner Brothers, distributor of the Sex Pistols album in the U.S., which the label rejected. Johnston later explained "Texas was a scary and dangerous place back then. The idea behind playing shows only in Texas was to get an honest reaction like the Pistols were getting in Britain and Europe... And you could say that Malcolm achieved a victory of sorts as two of the dates were in Texas."<sup>80</sup> The tour was scheduled to kick off in December 1977, but the U.S. Embassy refused to grant visas because of each of the group members' various criminal convictions. Warner Brothers executive Ted Jaffe successfully argued that the offenses were "misdemeanors" resulting in neither fines nor jail time, and the State Department granted a two-week visa on the condition that Warner Brothers post a surety bond of \$1 million.<sup>81</sup> Due to McLaren's lackadaisical approach to managing and lack of planning in applying for a visa, the Sex Pistols missed an opportunity to appear on Saturday Night Live. McLaren insisted on not playing New York or Los Angeles, but

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<sup>77</sup> "Rock and Roll" (TV Series), Chapter 9, "Punk." BBC and WGBH Educational Foundation (Elizabeth Deane, executive producer), 1995. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ggnuDrrJiF8>.

<sup>78</sup> The poorly-sourced account of one unnamed band member vomiting into an airport garbage can at Heathrow soon snowballed into an oft-repeated myth in the worldwide press. While the Pistols were occasionally spat upon by concertgoers (with the viscous favor often returned by band members), vomiting on stage and in public was not as common as newspaper stories would indicate.

<sup>79</sup> Savage, *England's Dreaming*, 445.

<sup>80</sup> Mick O'Shea, *The Sex Pistols Invade America: The Fateful U.S. Tour, January 1978*, Illustrated edition (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2018), 12.

<sup>81</sup> Savage, 444.

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placated the label by agreeing to 5,400 capacity Winterland Ballroom in San Francisco.<sup>82</sup> McLaren also insisted on low ticket prices to attract working class audiences, proposing \$2.00, but settling for \$3.50.

In January 1978, the Sex Pistols finally embarked upon their short, tumultuous American tour that influenced American and Texas music. McLaren primarily booked shows in southern cities in order to maximize culture clash and confrontation, and selected venues that were, for the most part, country music mainstays where he hoped to provoke hostile reactions to the band. The band made seven U.S. appearances:

- January 5: Great Southeast Music Hall, Atlanta, Georgia
- January 6: Taliesyn Ballroom, Memphis, Tennessee
- January 8: Randy's Rodeo, San Antonio, Texas
- January 9: Kingfish Club, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
- January 10: Longhorn Ballroom, Dallas, Texas
- January 12: Cain's Ballroom, Tulsa, Oklahoma (NRHP 2003 as "Cain's Dancing Academy")
- January 14: Winterland Ballroom, San Francisco, California.<sup>83</sup>

Hitting their stride after the first two shows, the band's appearance at Randy's Rodeo in San Antonio was especially chaotic, with Sid Vicious for the first time stealing center stage in front of the tour's most hostile crowd. Roberta Bayley of *Punk Magazine*, who also worked at CBGB, noted the "definite sense of violence. Dallas was also a little nuts: the head butting, the blood, etc. In those cities there was a feeling that there were people who just came to cause trouble."<sup>84</sup> The San Antonio show was noteworthy for the heightened antagonism between the band and the audience, who pelted the stage with hamburgers and beer bottles, but also became a touchstone for members of the nascent punk community in music-savvy Austin, whose ranks grew rapidly in the aftermath with the formation of dozens of bands, including the Big Boys and the Dicks.

*The Sex Pistols Play the Longhorn Ballroom*

The first mention of the Sex Pistols in a major daily newspaper in the Dallas area was in the *Fort Worth Star Telegram* in November 1976, which published New York-based syndicated rock music columnist Lisa Robinson's coverage of the musical scene at CBGB and elsewhere. Answering the question "What is Punk Rock?" Robinson identified it as "basic rock and roll music" and quoted Patti Smith's guitarist Lenny Kaye as calling it "more of a stance than music. It's an attitude." Robinson identified burgeoning scenes in D.C., Los Angeles, Boston, and London, describing the English bands as "more conscious of their alienation than their American 'punk rock counterparts' counterparts; and their look not so much black leather as ripped, paint-smeared clothing held together by safety pins and very short scraggly hair."<sup>85</sup> The following month, another article by Robinson identified the Sex Pistols as the "leaders of what has been called England's 'punk rock' scene" and reported on the furor over the Today Show incident and the resulting cancelling of concerts and radio station refusals to play "Anarchy in the UK." Robinson recounts a recent trip to England, where she

"raced to see the Sex Pistols at Manchester's Electric Circus Club where they were on tour with The Clash and New York Band the Heartbreakers... There is an element of danger and excitement around this scene, for no rock group has polarized people since the early Rolling Stones. Parents are outraged and refuse to allow the Pistols record in the house, the whole bit... I thought the Sex Pistols were great. Their musical influence can be traced to the very early New York Dolls, but all comparisons end there. The

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<sup>82</sup> O'Shea, 12.

<sup>83</sup> The missed dates included the planned opening show in Homestead, PA (Leona Theater), followed by Chicago (Ivanhoe Theater), Cleveland (Agora Ballroom), and Arlington, Virginia (Alexandria Roller Rink).

<sup>84</sup> O'Shea, 69.

<sup>85</sup> Lisa Robinson. "What Is 'Punk Rock'?" *Fort Worth Star Telegram*, 6 Nov. 1976, p. 32.

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current English scene is like the New York CBGB scene only in that the bands are young (from 14 to the early 20s), and they provide a “street’ alternative to the Bigtime Music Venue... The music is very, very fast, very loud, intense and totally unpretentious.<sup>86</sup>

By the summer of 1977, Texas papers in far-flung cities such as Abilene, Victoria, and El Paso covered the punk rock movement in syndicated columns.<sup>87</sup>

On January 4, 1978, the *Dallas Morning News* published a UPI wire story about the Sex Pistols tour, mentioning the show scheduled for the following Tuesday at the Longhorn Ballroom. Reporting on the band’s visa woes, the article noted that the “young musicians were granted visas after record company officials applied for the entry permits. Sex Pistols Steve Jones told reporters ‘We’re going to see Uncle Sam for the New Year and take some dollars off the yanks.’”<sup>88</sup> On the day of the show, the paper reported tightened security at the Longhorn Ballroom, noting that owner Dewey Groom said promoters would provide ten security guards, “including four plainclothesmen on duty, with two members of the vice squad and at least one inspector from the fire department.” The ballroom capacity was 2,500 but three ticket outlets reported only 1,500 tickets were sold. The article referenced a scuffle at the Memphis show, and the incident at San Antonio when Sid Vicious hit fended off an attack from an aggressive crowd member by bringing his bass guitar upon his head.<sup>89</sup>

A promotional KZMP radio spot announcing the Longhorn Ballroom appearance, featuring a deep-voiced male announcer speaking in a hushed tone under a mashup of songs from the new album, primed the north Texas audience:

They said no one could be more bizarre as Alice Cooper or more destructive than Kiss. They have not seen the Sex Pistols...Banned in their own home country. England’s Sex Pistols. Denied admittance to the United States. The Sex Pistols bring the new wave to the Metroplex this Tuesday night at the Longhorn Ballroom. Experience the Sex Pistols. Tickets available only \$3.50...They said it couldn’t happen, but it happens Tuesday night. The Sex Pistols. Live.”<sup>90</sup>

Clarke Blacker, bass player for the Dallas proto-punk band the Nervebreakers (who had opened for the Ramones in Dallas the previous year), reached out to the concert promoter to offer services as the opening band. Blacker later noted that “the small local punk scene was abuzz, but that was a pretty small scene...The atmosphere in Dallas was pretty poisonous. I was surprised by the hatred that largely came from mainstream rock fans, not just towards the Sex Pistols, but to new music in general.”<sup>91</sup> Canadian rock writer Jim Parrott, who moved to Dallas the day before the Longhorn Ball room show, noted that “There wasn’t much going on in Dallas except perhaps for the Nervebreakers... However, the Pistols’ show soon changed everything as bands like Control and the Earthworms started popping up.”<sup>92</sup> Curtis Smith, who photographed the Sex Pistols show as a 17-year-old, recalls that Dallas did not have much of a punk rock scene at that time, and that the audience was made up of equal parts “old cowboys at the bar that had been there all day drinking...a handful of people in punk rock garb with piercings and hand-painted faces...and folks seeing what it was all about, checking out the spectacle.”<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Lisa Robinson. “Rock Talk.” *Fort Worth Star Telegram*, 23 Dec. 1976, p. 48. Newspapers nationwide including several in Texas including El Paso, Abilene, covered to the television incident but not the larger punk phenomena in England as Robinson did.

<sup>87</sup> Danny Goddard. “‘Punk Rock’ New Mode of Musical Expression for British Youth.” *Abilene Reporter News*, 17 July 1977, p. 25.

<sup>88</sup> “Sex Pistols Set Dallas Stop.” *Dallas Morning News*, 4 Jan. 1978, p. 11.

<sup>89</sup> Helen Parmley. “Pistols Won’t Be ‘Fired.’” *Dallas Morning News*, 10 Jan. 1978, p. 29.

<sup>90</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMq26X3RaK0>

<sup>91</sup> O’Shea, 107.

<sup>92</sup> O’Shea, 108.

<sup>93</sup> Juan R. Govea, “Photographer Curtis Smith Shot the Sex Pistols’ Shitshow at the Longhorn Ballroom,” *Dallas Observer*, January 14, 2022.

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At the Longhorn Ballroom, the Sex Pistols played twelve songs in their regular set, returning to play the Stooges' "No Fun" as an encore, with Rotten exclaiming "You cowboys must be (expletive) mad to want more of us."<sup>94</sup> Video recordings show an energized crowd, and even moments where Johnny and Sid are evidently enjoying themselves.<sup>95</sup> Vicious, a heroin addict, was cut off from his supply and desperate for drugs, and appeared on stage with a magic-marker message scrawled over his chest reading "GIMME A FIX." During the show, after an audience member headbutted Vicious on the nose, he continued to perform with blood covering his face.<sup>96</sup>

Jim Parrett reviewed the show for *Stagelife* magazine, noting that grim-faced Longhorn Ballroom owner Dewy Groom watched an "army of 2,000 weirdos punk look-alikes, and wild cowboys file into his ballroom."<sup>97</sup> Groom, who told the *Dallas Morning News* that he hadn't heard of the Sex Pistols before their booking at the ballroom, also noted of the crowd during the show "There's not a regular in there."<sup>98</sup> The ballroom had a strict "no bottle" policy, serving beer in plastics cups, which helped limit the numbers of dangerous thrown projectiles that was a hallmark of the San Antonio show. Cups and cans of beer were nevertheless thrown as the Sex Pistols took the ballroom stage, and somehow Vicious acquired a beer bottle, which he broke and used to slash his chest. The ballroom's low ceiling diminished the sound quality from the distorted PA, and because Vicious' single-string bass playing was barely audible, the musical heft was carried by Jones' guitar and Cook's drums alone. *Punk* magazine noted that:

The Pistols seemed to have fun, at least Sid did. A punkette from L.A. gave him a bloody nose so he wiped the blood all over himself. He was so out of it was playing with three busted strings on his bass. Pistols fans climbed all over each other trying to tear down a curtain that framed the stage with portraits of C&W stars. During 'Anarchy' one fanatic tore Johnny's t-shirt off his body. John liked that bit so much he shook the guy's hand.<sup>99</sup>

Parrett later described the show as "ramshackle. It was at once terrible and wonderful...Sid didn't even sound like he was plugged in, let alone playing with the band. Rotten was in command and most eyes were glued on him...When the band started taunting the crowd, the atmosphere got even wilder but hardly dangerous...People were like 'punk zombies' for most of the show. In reflection it was more of an event than a musical concert. It was history."<sup>100</sup>

The San Antonio and Dallas shows were the most notorious nights of the tour, and have come to symbolize a level of chaos that was largely absent from many of the band's U.S. performances. After nearly 400 articles across North America that publicized the band's controversial appearance and behavior before the tour opened, the major news media seemed disappointed by their first two shows. In Atlanta, news coverage of the Pistols' show called it "dull," saying that "they didn't even throw up once" and "their spitting was strictly bush-league."<sup>101</sup> Other newspapers labelled the Atlanta show as "loud but relatively tame" and described the Pistols as "harmless boys."<sup>102</sup> The Memphis show was also described as "very mellow"<sup>103</sup> although oversold tickets resulted in entry refused to 200 purchasers, leading to violence outside the venue. During the third show on the tour, in San Antonio, audience members threw food and empty beer cans at the band,

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<sup>94</sup> "Few Blanks Fired by Sex Pistols," *Fort Worth Star Telegram*, January 11, 1978.

<sup>95</sup> A video of the show is online: *Sex Pistols Live at Longhorn Ballroom, Dallas, Texas, USA 10/01/1978 (FULL CONCERT)*, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OMq26X3RaKQ>.

<sup>96</sup> Savage, 448, 452. There is some dispute regarding whether Vicious' nose bleed was caused by a woman's punch or a thrown beer can that hit a microphone he was about to speak into. Vicious himself gave different accounts after the show.

<sup>97</sup> O'Shea, 110.

<sup>98</sup> "Pistols Attract Curious; Genuine 'Punk Rock' Fans in Visible Minority," *Dallas Morning News*, January 11, 1978.

<sup>99</sup> John Holmstrom, in *Punk*, (May/June 1978); *The Best of Punk Magazine*, 2011, p. 250.

<sup>100</sup> O'Shea, 117.

<sup>101</sup> Ron Hudspeth, "Pistols' 'Event' was Anti-Social," *Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, January 4, 1978, 2A.

<sup>102</sup> "The British Invasion: Sex Pistols are loud but relatively tame," *The Citizen*, January 6, 1978, 27. Also "Sex Pistols were harmless boys," *Charlotte News*, January 6, 1978, 2A.

<sup>103</sup> Joe Frolik, "Contempt Breeds Familiarity," *Austin American Statesman*, January 10, 1978, C1.

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who responded with insults; Sid Vicious swung his bass at an audience member, but missed.<sup>104</sup> The uneventful show in Baton Rouge featured a Cajun opening act called Good Doopsie and the Twisters, whose lead guitarist could play with his nose while standing on his head.<sup>105</sup> The sixth show, in Tulsa, was barely covered by the news media, and by the time the Pistols had closed out the tour in San Francisco, major media news articles were more focused on the lack of controversy.

By contrast, the Pistols' Texas shows lived up to the pre-tour hype and have come to represent the entire tour in the public imagination. Vicious lauded the "good crowd" in Dallas, adding "When an audience gets that excited and throws a beer can and hits me smack in the face that's really good." *Fort Worth Star Telegram* music reviewer Perry Stewart described the performance as "elements of the Rocky Horror Picture Show, a Fellini movie run backwards and Steppenwolf on a bad night. Their irreverent song lyrics to tunes such as 'Anarchy in the U.K.' are not the controversial items they were in Britain. It's just as well as their singing was largely unintelligible." Despite the unease expressed in the local media prior to the show, a Dallas County sheriff's deputy noted "I have seen worse crowds, behavior-wise."<sup>106</sup> *Rolling Stone* photographer Annie Liebowitz's camera bag, containing lenses and all of the film she had shot throughout the tour, was stolen at the Longhorn, but the tour was nevertheless extensively photographed by Roberta Bayley and Joe Stevens for *Punk* magazine.<sup>107</sup>

### *Influence of the Sex Pistols on Popular Music*

The Sex Pistols split up in San Francisco on the last night of their brief American tour. The band had already been highly influential in England, and would prove to be important to American music as well. After the Sex Pistols imploded in January 1978, an untold number of imitator bands formed nationwide, most of which disappeared with few traces, and none with significant chart success.

In Texas, punk emerged as a musical genre and cultural movement in the aftermath of the Sex Pistols' performances in San Antonio and Dallas. Beginning in 1978, a loosely-organized punk rock circuit developed in the state, and nationally known punk acts toured Texas.<sup>108</sup> At the time of the Longhorn Ballroom show, Dallas had a small punk rock scene (numbering in the hundreds of fans and artists), but the tour led to the formation of new Dallas punk bands, including the Hugh Beaumont Experience, and the notoriously caustic and antagonizing Stick Men with Rayguns. The Nervebreakers, later described as "the granddaddies of the (Dallas) punk scene," continued to perform as the city's favorite opening act for punk-adjacent bands such as the Clash in 1979, as well as on national tours for the Police, Boomtown Rats, and others.<sup>109</sup> In 1979 they played with Roky Erickson (founding member and the leader of the 13th Floor Elevators) at the Palladium.<sup>110</sup>

In February 1978, Raul's, a Tejano music club across the street from the University of Texas campus in Austin, hosted its first punk rock show, and quickly became the center of the local scene, arguably the most robust and influential of its type in Texas. In November 1979, the Big Boys played their first show at a former fur coat storage facility known as the Vault. By early 1980 punk shows were booked at several Austin venues, including the Inner Sanctum record store, Duke's (formerly Vulcan Gas Company), and the legendary Armadillo World Headquarters, which hosted the Punk Prom, featuring the Bigs Boys, the Next, the Reactors, and the Dicks. Raul's and the Armadillo closed by early 1981, but the

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<sup>104</sup> Robert Hilburn, "Sex Pistols Hit Texas, Vice Versa," *Los Angeles Times*, January 10, 1978, 49, 53.

<sup>105</sup> "Sex Pistols in Baton Rouge," *McComb, Mississippi Enterprise-Journal*, January 10, 1978, 4.

<sup>106</sup> "Few Blanks Fired by Sex Pistols," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, January 11, 1978. The officer was perhaps alluding to the likes of UT-Oklahoma football fans who descended on Dallas every fall, which at one time prompted the use of segregated jail cells at the city lockup, marked to keep the OK and TX fans separated.

<sup>107</sup> "Reward Offered," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, January 13, 1978, 23.

<sup>108</sup> John H. Slate, "Punk Rock," *Handbook of Texas Online*, Texas State Historical Association, tshaonline.org.

<sup>109</sup> Alan Ayo, "Barry Kooda Steps from Behind the Stage to Rock Again with The Nervebreakers," *Dallas Observer*, July 24, 2013.

Colleen Gilson, "A New Documentary Revisits the History of Dallas Punk," *Dallas Observer*, November 24, 2020.

<sup>110</sup> Barry 'Kooda' Huebner, "The Nervebreakers History," nervebreakers.com.

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punk scene continued to morph and expand into numerous subgenres, some as distinct as the bands themselves. Scratch Acid pioneered noise rock, the Hickoids helped define cowpunk, and San Antonio's Butthole Surfers frequently brought their chaotic live shows to Austin, melding elements of psychedelia, noise rock, and punk with dark humor. The Big Boys helped introduce skate punk as a new style, brought elements of funk into their hardcore punk style (including the introduction of a horn section), and encouraged the vitality and growth of the movement by encouraging audience members to "go start your own band" at the end of each performance. Austin's punk scene has been the subject of books, documentaries, and a recent serialized history in the weekly *Austin Chronicle*, in which journalist Ken Hoge said of the Sex Pistol's San Antonio performance:

The show changed my life, literally. My musical tastes and attitude about performance art were never the same. I do not think they would have mattered at all, though, if the music had not been so real or if Johnny Rotten had not been such an amazingly gross performer or if Sid Vicious had not been such a suicidal maniac. It was an impossible combination that somehow clicked, like winning the cultural lottery.<sup>111</sup>

Author James Burns summed up the growth of Texas punk scenes in the wake of the Sex Pistols' tour:

The Sex Pistols ignited the spark and the countless bands that followed in their wake fanned the flames...Before long, punk scenes were sprouting up in just about every major city and many small towns...By the time the Sex Pistols played the Longhorn Ballroom in Dallas in 1978, a local band, the Nervebreakers, was opening up for them. After that, punk bands started sprouting up all over Texas: The Dot Vaeth Group, Superman's Girlfriend, The Huns, Terminal Mind, the list goes on and on. Shortly thereafter, bands like the Big Boys and the Dicks, both from Austin, became legends of their local scene."<sup>112</sup>

Major American media portrayed both punk acts and their fans (sometimes accurately) as violent, antisocial, and unruly, leading to broadly-applied stigma that made punk rock and much of the music directly inspired by the Sex Pistols virtually unmarketable. The lasting legacy of British punk in the U.S. was therefore the manner in which American musicians used it as an impetus to create their own subgenres of punk and meld punk attitude with other musical styles. Inspired by punk's energy and DIY ethic, the movement promoted the creation of art and music by nonprofessionals, and inspired the creation of independent record labels and fanzines through which music could be sold, shared, and promoted outside the control of major entertainment corporations. Independent musicians adopted broad and experimental approaches of punk to expand upon funk, electronic music, jazz, dance music, worldbeat, and numerous other genres. Although punk music of the Sex Pistols' style did not directly reach mainstream audiences through the early 1980s, a more melodic and accessible "new wave" movement represented a broadening of punk under an umbrella that included a variety of music that was nevertheless less commercial than mainstream rock.<sup>113</sup> The establishment of MTV in 1981 was fundamental to introducing this music to a larger audience, and even legacy rock acts began to incorporate elements of new wave in their recording and performances, beginning to blur the differences between corporate and independent music. Through the 1980s, music known collectively as "college rock," and "alternative," became an increasing segment of the music offered by major labels, and the influence of punk finally reached chart success through the grunge movement, whereby bands such as Nirvana melded punk and heavy metal to create bona fide hit records. This level of acceptance is referenced in the

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<sup>111</sup> Margaret Moser, "Holiday in San Antonio: The Night the Sex Pistols Went Off at Randy's Rodeo," *The Austin Chronicle*, [austinchronicle.com](http://austinchronicle.com).

<sup>112</sup> James Burns, *Let's Go to Hell: Scattered Memories of the Butthole Surfers* (Parker, Colorado: Outskirts Press/self-published under "Cheap Drugs" imprint for Cheap Drugs Records, 2015).

<sup>113</sup> The term "new wave" originated as a general category for the music that emerged after punk rock, regardless of the level of punk's influence on particular acts.

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title of the documentary “1991: the Year Punk Broke,” filmed during that year’s European tour of Sonic Youth and Nirvana.<sup>114</sup>

### **Conclusion**

The Longhorn Ballroom complex is nominated to the National Register under Criterion A in the area of Entertainment/Recreation at the state level of significance. For much of its nearly 75-year history, it has been one of the premier music venues in Texas, hosting major artists across wide variety of genres, including western swing, country and western, rhythm and blues, mainstream rock and roll, and punk rock, often mixing these within the same week or even from day to day. Collectively, these performances reflect the state’s rich history of musical innovation. The Longhorn Ballroom played a significant role in the history of punk rock in the United States as one of the seven venues where the Sex Pistols played on their U.S. tour of the in 1978, a series of events that brought attention (both positive and negative) to the punk movement in the U.S. and influenced the course of music nationwide. The period of significance begins in 1950, when the building was constructed and operated as the Bob Wills Ranch House, and continues through 1978, when the Sex Pistols performed their legendary concert at the Longhorn Ballroom. Although the 1978 date is less than 50 years in the past, the influence of the Sex Pistols on American popular music justifies the claim of exceptional significance under Criteria Consideration G.

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<sup>114</sup> Kurt Cobain’s personal journals (published in 2002) included his hand-written list of influential albums, titled “Top 50 by Nirvana.” The list included the Sex Pistols’ “Never Mind the Bollocks” and “The Flowers of Romance” by Public Image Limited, formed by John Lydon in 1978. Six of the fifty albums were by Texas musicians, with one album each by Scratch Acid, Daniel Johnston, and MDC (all from Austin) and blues and folk singer Lead Belly, with two albums by the Butthole Surfers.



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**Acreage of Property:** 4.41 acres

**Coordinates**

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

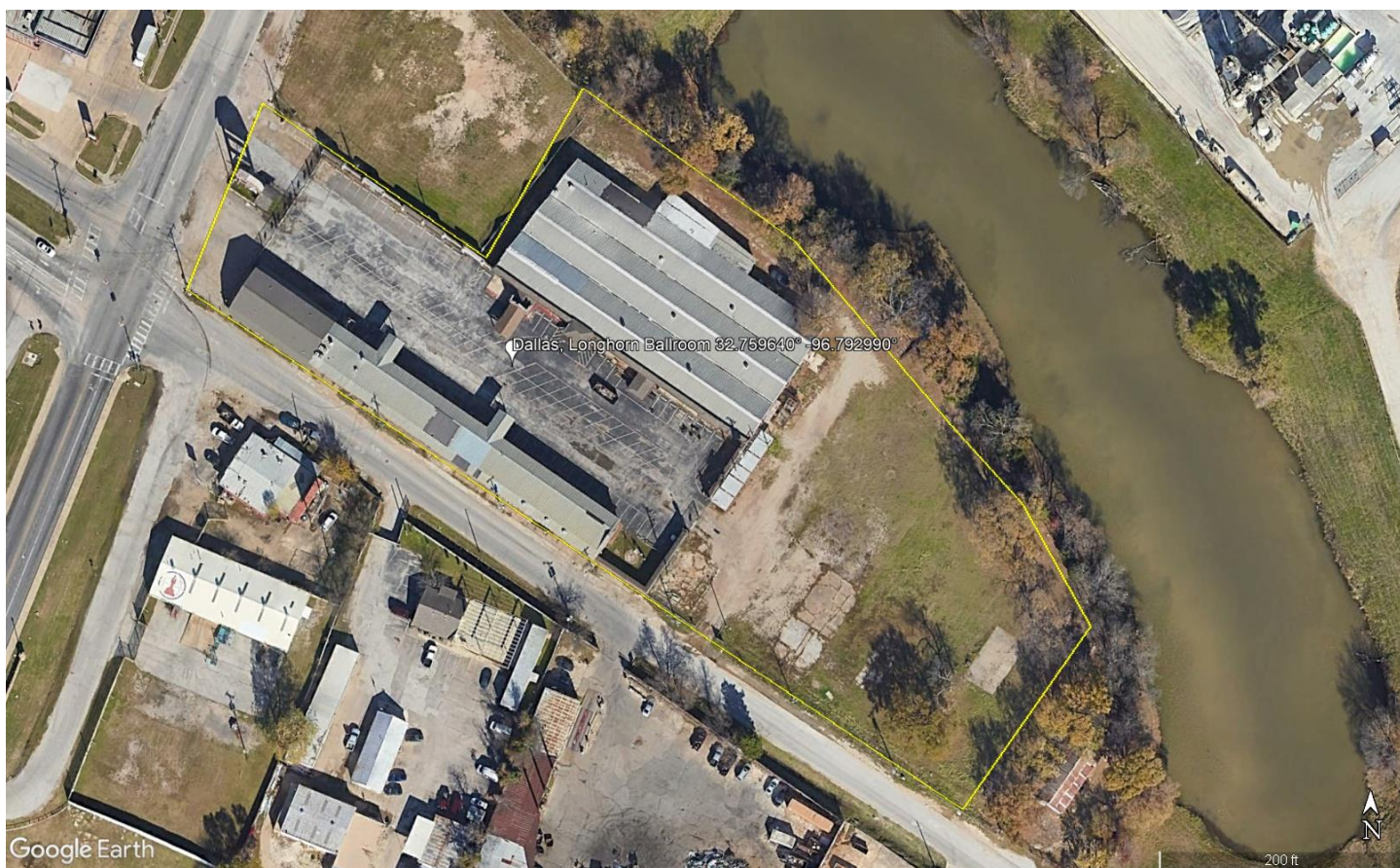
1. Latitude: 32.75965 Longitude: -96.79298

**Verbal Boundary Description:** The boundary contains the current legal parcels "Block 76/7345, Lots 1-3 and 5-15," as shown on the following page.

This property is oriented northwest-southeast and is bounded by Corinth Street to the northwest, South Riverfront Boulevard to the southwest, the Trinity River meander to the northeast, and Block 76/7345, Lot 16 to the southeast. In addition, it is bounded to the north by and abuts the southeast and southwest sides of Block 76/7345, Lot 4.

**Boundary Justification:** The boundary includes the property transferred with the sale of the Longhorn Ballroom complex from O. L. Nelms to Dewey Groom in 1967.

Source: Google Earth, accessed December 21, 2023.



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### Nomination Boundary

Legal Description: BLK 76/7345 LTS 1-3, 5-15

Source: Dallas Central Appraisal District (CAD).





Longhorn Ballroom, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

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Longhorn Ballroom neighborhood location, southeast of downtown Dallas

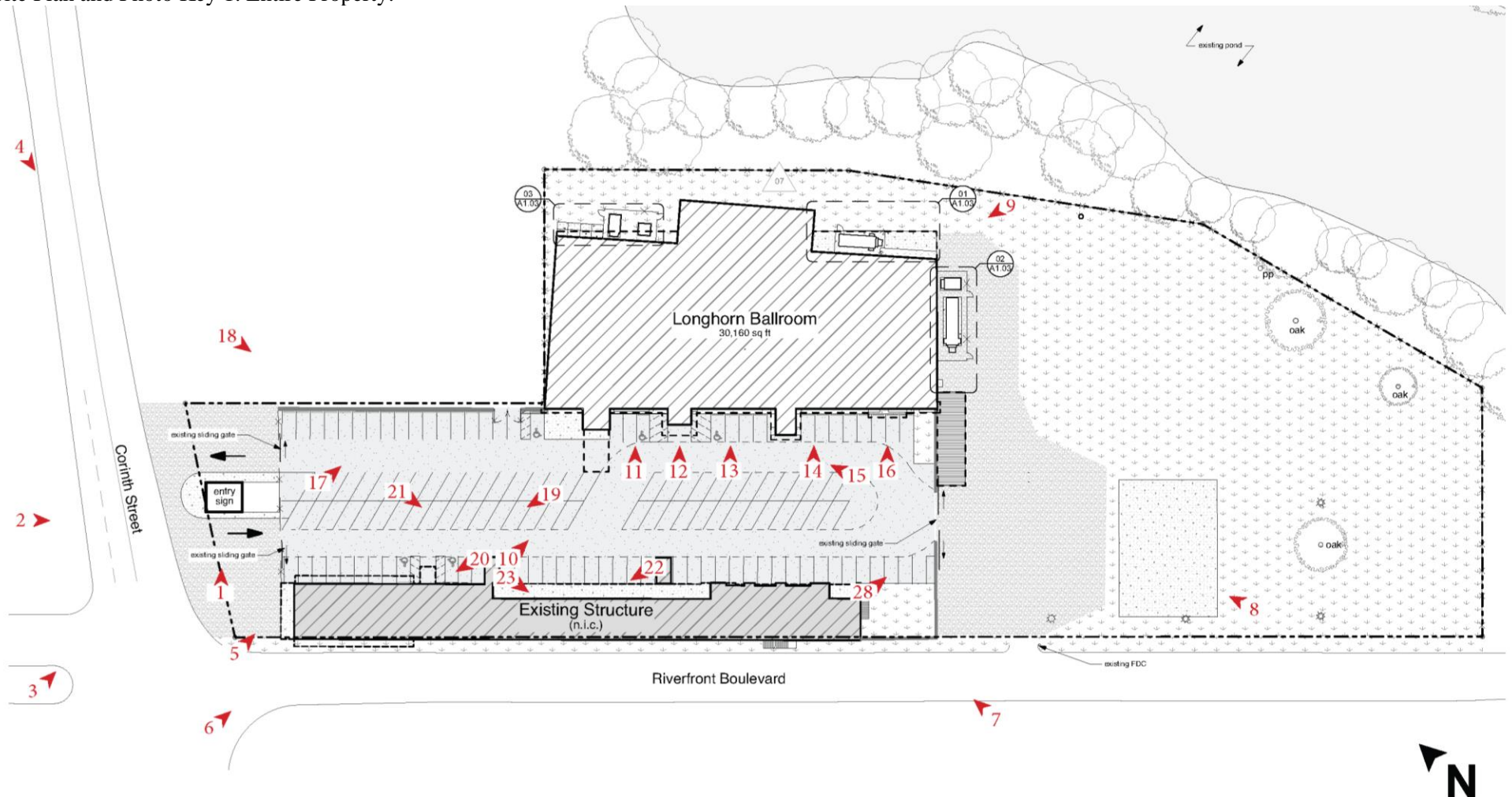
Google Earth, accessed September 9, 2022





Longhorn Ballroom, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

Site Plan and Photo Key 1. Entire Property.



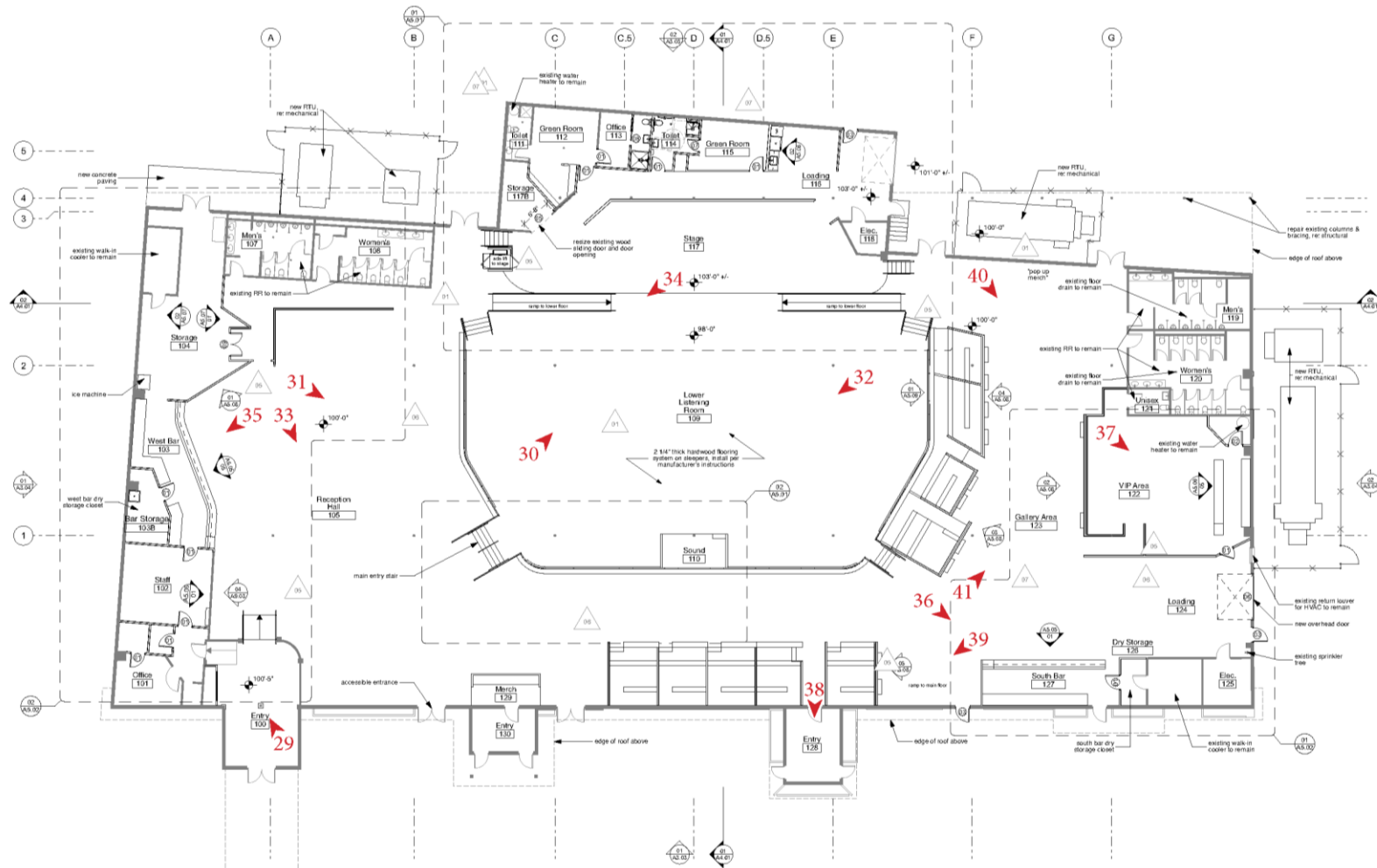
Site Plan - Photo Key (photos 1-23, 28)  
Drawing courtesy of DSGN Associates, Inc.

Longhorn Ballroom  
200 Corinth Street  
Dallas, Dallas County, Texas 75207

National Park Service  
Texas Historical Commission

Longhorn Ballroom, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

Site Plan and Photo Key 2. Ballroom Building.



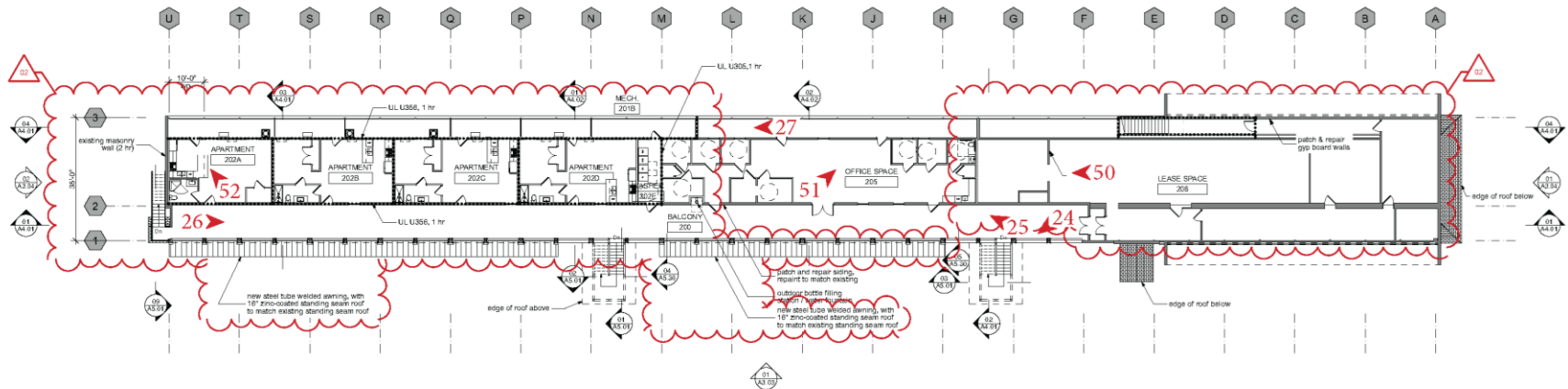
Longhorn Ballroom - Photo Key (photos 29-41)  
Drawing courtesy of DSGN Associates, Inc.

Longhorn Ballroom  
200 Corinth Street  
Dallas, Dallas County, Texas 75207

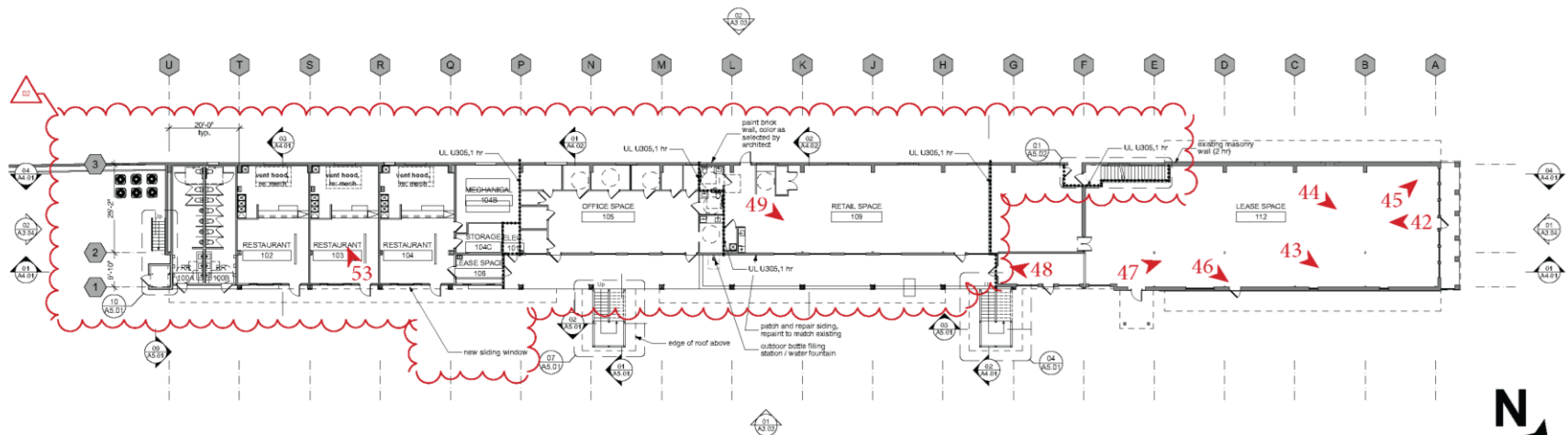
National Park Service  
Texas Historical Commission

Longhorn Ballroom, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

Site Plan and Photo Key 3. Apartment Building.



02 Floor Plan - Level 2  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



01 Floor Plan - Ground Level  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"





Longhorn Ballroom, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

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Figure 1. Postcard of Bob Wills' Ranch House with views of the dining room, interior view, and exterior view with Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys bus. (Boston Public Library/The Tichnor Brothers Collection).

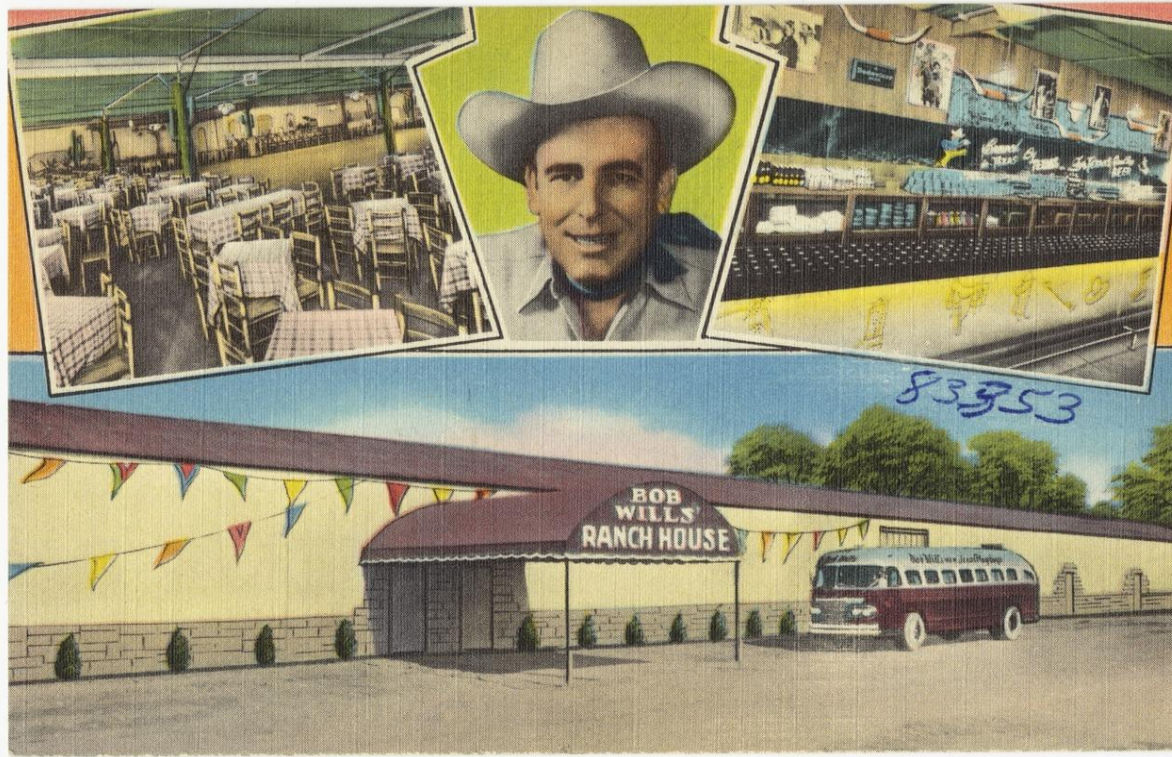


Figure 2. Bob Wills riding his beloved horse Punkin in the Longhorn Ballroom (longhornballroom.com).





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Figure 3. Post card of Wills Point, formerly the Aragon Ballroom, Sacramento, California (Boston Public Library/The Tichnor Brothers Collection).

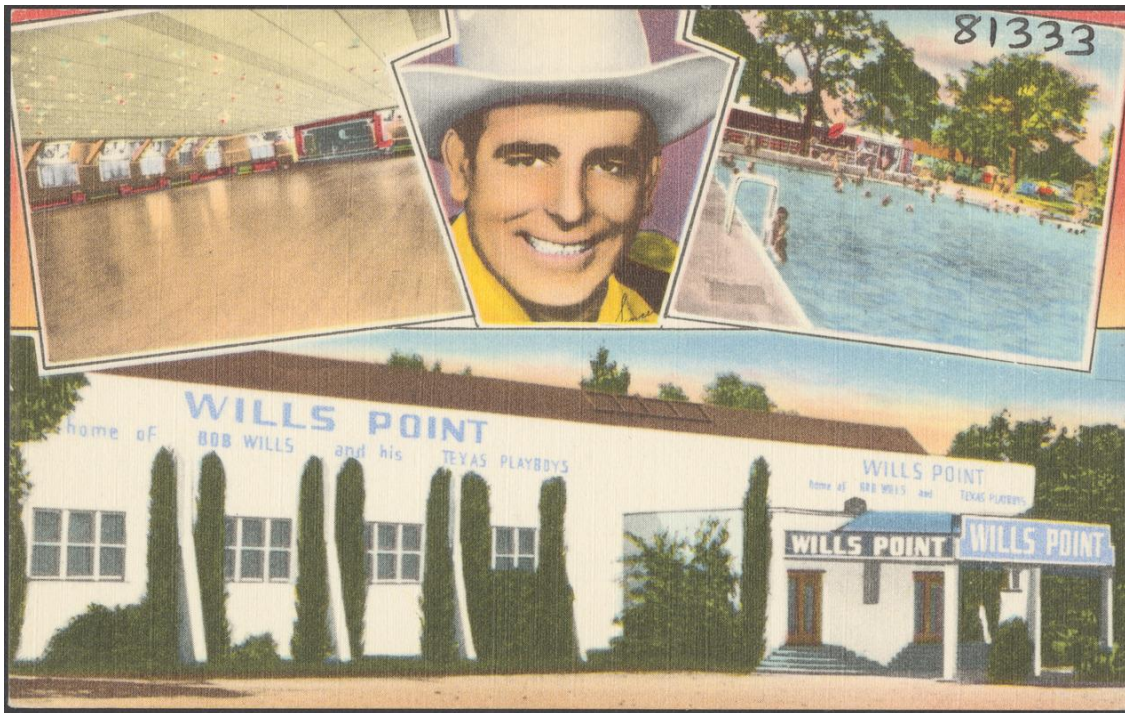


Figure 4. Dewey Groom and the Texas Longhorns at the Longhorn Ranch, 1925 ½ Main Street, ca. 1951 (Kessler Entertainment).





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Figure 5. Postcard of the Longhorn Barbershop (Boston Public Library/The Tichnor Brothers Collection).

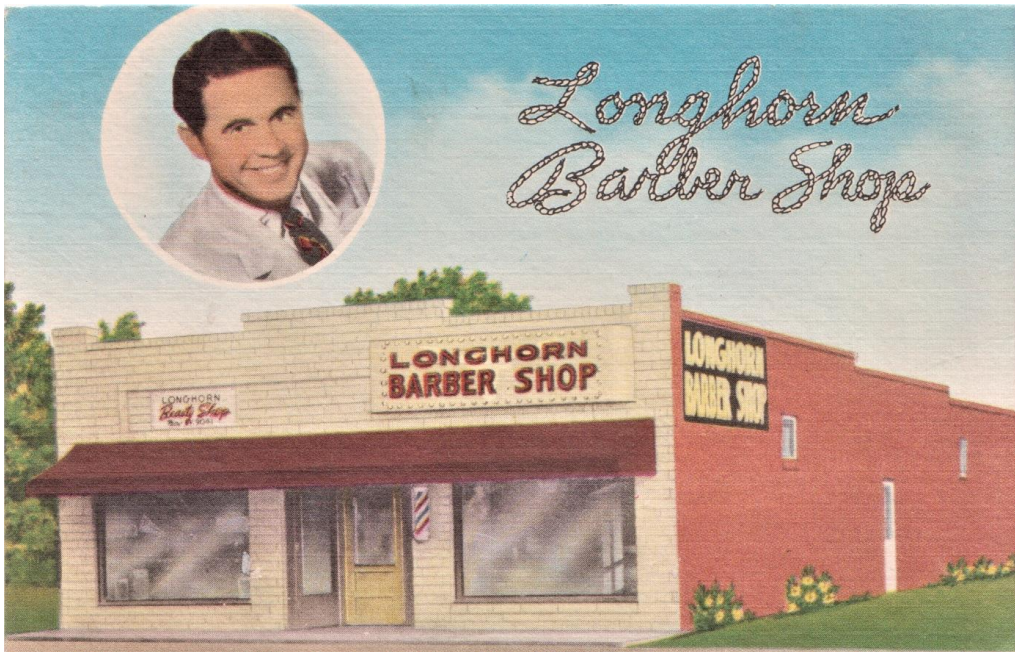


Figure 6. Dewey Groom and the Texas Longhorns at the Longhorn Ballroom, ca. 1954 (Saran Records Collection).



Longhorn Ballroom, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

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Figure 7. Nat King Cole in concert at the Longhorn Ballroom, ca. 1954 (R. C. Hickman for *Jet* Magazine, in the Hickman Photographic Archive at the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History).



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Figure 8. This 1960 photograph of a car collision at the intersection of Corinth Street and Industrial Blvd. is the earliest photograph found of the area around the Longhorn Ballroom. Image shows a tall, vertical 'Longhorn (Ballroom)' blade-style sign and the MK&T railroad underpass in the background. The two-story apartment building at the corner of the Longhorn Ballroom site is in its original condition, with the wrap-around balcony clearly visible and a neon "BEER" sign extending from the gable roof over the first-floor entrance. (G. Williams Jones Collection, Southern Methodist University)





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Figure 9. Apartment building façade as it appeared in 1967 (Saran Collection).



Figure 10. Longhorn Ballroom sign with its original marquee and signage on stone base, Ca. 1968 (longhornballroom.com/history)



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Figure 11. Appearance of the front facade of the Longhorn Ballroom under Dewey Groom's ownership, 1968–1986  
(Flashback Dallas: Flashbackdallas.files.wordpress.com)



Figure 12. Appearance of the exterior wall of the Longhorn complex under Dewey Grooms' ownership, 1968–1986  
(Flashback Dallas: Flashbackdallas.files.wordpress.com)



Figure 13. Appearance of the Longhorn Ballroom dining area with stage at right, under Dewey Grooms' ownership, 1968-1986, undated photo (Country Music Hall of Fame)



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Figure 14. Dewey Groom in his office at the Longhorn Ballroom, undated photo (Kessler Entertainment)



Figure 15. From left: Charley Pride, Dewey Groom and Billy Deaton in Dewey Groom's office, undated photo (Kessler Entertainment)





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Figure 16. Quinlan Groom, Willie Nelson, and Dewey Groom in Dewey Groom's office, June 1975 (Kessler Entertainment)



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Figure 17. Longhorn Ballroom sign, advertising the Sex Pistols show on January 10, 1978.



Figure 18. Paul Cook and Steve Jones Riding the Longhorn Steer (Roberta Bayley, *Punk Magazine*)





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Figure 19. The Sex Pistols on the Longhorn stage before their January 10, 1978, show (Richard Aaron)



Figure 20. Sid Vicious looks on as security roughs up attendees (Joe Stevens, *Punk Magazine*)



Longhorn Ballroom, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

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Figure 21. Sid Vicious on the Longhorn bar (Roberta Bayley, *Punk Magazine*)

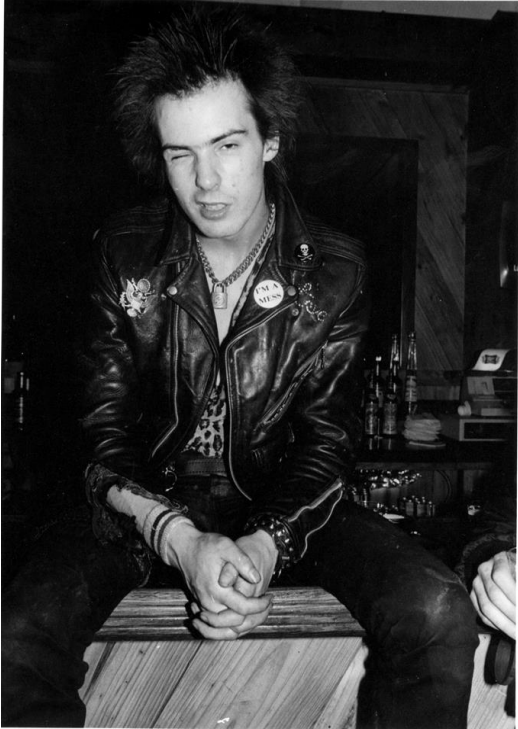


Figure 22. Johnny Rotten on stage at the Longhorn Ballroom. (Curtis Smith).

<https://www.dallasobserver.com/music/44-years-ago-sid-vicious-got-a-bloody-nose-at-a-sex-pistols-show-in-dallas-13210829>



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Figure 23. From left to right, an unidentified man, Doug Groom, and Mick Jagger in Dewey Groom's office the night of a Bobby "Blue" Bland concert at the Longhorn Ballroom, July 1978 (Kessler Entertainment)



Figure 24. Longhorn Ballroom sign (1980) advertising a concert starring Loretta Lynn (Saran Knight archive).





Longhorn Ballroom, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

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Figure 25. Ira Zack (left) and Jeff Liles (right), photographed next to an original mural at the Longhorn Ballroom, adjacent to the barbecue pit, ca. 1986 (R. Wilonsky, "From Bob Wills to Jack Ruby, Dallas' Longhorn Ballroom has History Worth Saving and a New Life Worth Celebrating," *Dallas Morning News*, February 10, 2017).

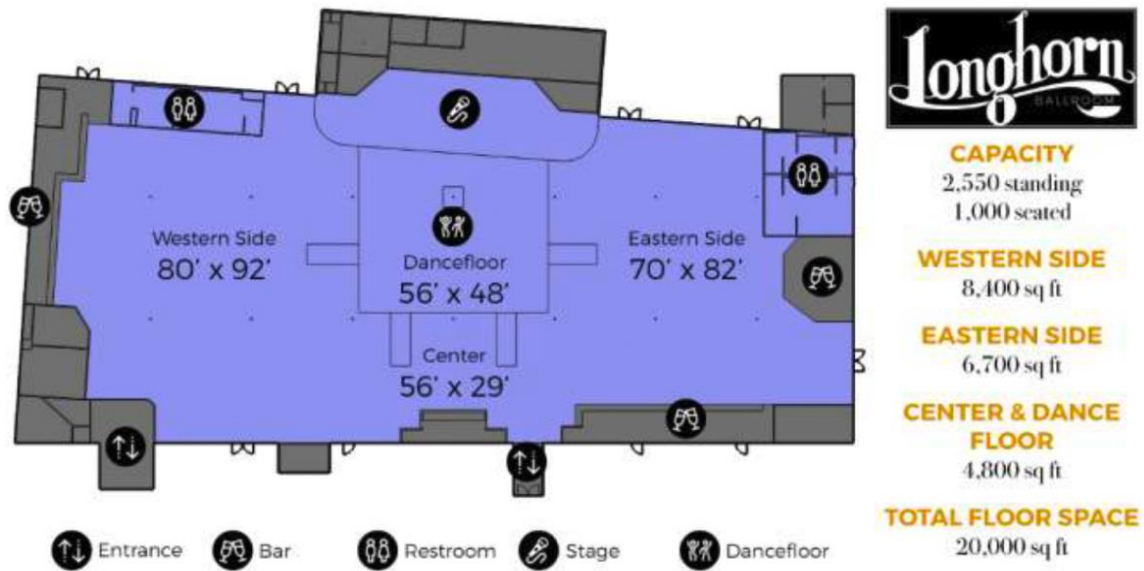


Figure 26. The dining room inside the Longhorn Ballroom, view from end of the northwest end of ballroom towards southeast with stage and dance floor in the background, ca. 2018 (longhornballroom.com).



Longhorn Ballroom, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

Figure 27. Image of floor plan by prior occupants, ca. 2018. The locations of the stage, dance floor, dining areas and perimeter circulation paths are shown in purple and have remained unchanged since 1950 (longhornballroom.com).





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**Photo 1**

Longhorn Ballroom sign, view northeast.



**Photo 2**

Longhorn Ballroom building (left), multi-use building (right), Longhorn Ballroom sign (center) and gates/fence with lone star and wagon wheel design, as seen from northwest side of Corinth Street, view southeast.



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**Photo 3**

Longhorn Ballroom sign (left), Longhorn Ballroom building (center), multi-use building (right), view east.



**Photo 4**

Longhorn Ballroom building (left), rear elevation of masonry wall (center), Longhorn Ballroom sign and multi-use building (right), view south.





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**Photo 5**

Northwest façade of multi-use building (right) and gates/fence with lone star and wagon wheel design (left), view east.



**Photo 6**

Southwest elevation of multi-use building, view east.



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**Photo 7**

Southwest elevation of multi-use building, view north.



**Photo 8**

Multi-use building (left) and Longhorn Ballroom building (right), view northwest from vacant land at the southeast end of the property.





Longhorn Ballroom, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

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**Photo 9**

Easternmost end of the Longhorn Ballroom building's northeast elevation, view west.



**Photo 10**

Southwest elevation of the Longhorn Ballroom building, view east.



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**Photo 11**

Non-historic mural and double entry doors to performance space, southwest elevation of the Longhorn Ballroom building, view northeast.



**Photo 12**

Faux "livery stable" and "store" projections flanked by double entry doors to performance space, southwest elevation of the Longhorn Ballroom building, view northeast.





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**Photo 13**

Non-historic mural of a cattle drive, southwest elevation of the Longhorn Ballroom building, view northeast.



**Photo 14**

Former barbecue pit with restored neon sign and non-historic murals featuring musicians (and previous owners) Bob Wills and Dewey Groom, southwest elevation of the Longhorn Ballroom building, view northeast.



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**Photo 15**

Southwest elevation of the Longhorn Ballroom building with restored neon sign above the former barbecue pit, view north.



**Photo 16**

Non-historic mural featuring musician (and previous owner) Dewey Groom, southwest elevation of the Longhorn Ballroom building, view northeast.





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**Photo 17**

Southwest façade of masonry wall/gate with faux Western scene on the northeast side of parking area, view east.



**Photo 18**

Northeast (rear) elevation of masonry wall/gate, view south.



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**Photo 19**

Northeast elevation of the multi-use building, view west from parking area.



**Photo 20**

Northeast elevation of the multi-use building with entry to former restaurant, view west from exterior staircase landing.





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**Photo 21**

Northeast elevation of the multi-use building, view south from parking area.



**Photo 22**

Northeast elevation of the multi-use building, view west from exterior staircase landing.



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**Photo 23**

First-floor windows and doors, northeast elevation of the multi-use building, view southeast.



**Photo 24**

Second-floor balcony, northeast elevation of the multi-use building, view east towards the Longhorn Ballroom building.





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**Photo 25**

Windows and doors along second-floor balcony, northeast elevation of the multi-use building, view southeast.



**Photo 26**

Second-floor balcony, northeast elevation of the multi-use building, view northwest.



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**Photo 27**

Second-floor balcony with faux windows and doors, southwest elevation of the multi-use building, view southeast.



**Photo 28**

Tall wooden fence and metal wagon wheel gate enclosing the parking area and “Texas Walk of Fame” walkway (left), view east towards vacant land at southeast end of the property.





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INTERIOR LONGHORN BALLROOM BUILDING

**Photo 29**

Main entrance area with framed memorabilia and display case, view north.



**Photo 30**

Main stage as seen from the expanded sunken dance floor, view east.



Longhorn Ballroom, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

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**Photo 31**

Interior performance space, view southeast.



**Photo 32**

Interior performance space overlooking the expanded sunken dance floor, view northwest.





Longhorn Ballroom, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

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**Photo 33**

Interior performance space with double entry doors and main entrance (right), view southwest.



**Photo 34**

Interior performance space overlooking the expanded sunken dance floor, view west from main stage towards main entrance and west bar.

Longhorn Ballroom, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

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**Photo 35**

West bar, view west.



**Photo 36**

South bar, view south.





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**Photo 37**

VIP area with bar, view south.



**Photo 38**

Interior of former barbecue pit with single entry doors, view southwest.



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**Photo 39**

Historic mural on interior southwest wall, view west.



**Photo 40**

Gallery area, view south towards restrooms, VIP area and south bar.





Longhorn Ballroom, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

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**Photo 41**

Gallery area with shadow box display cases, view east towards VIP area.



**Photo 42**

Former first-floor restaurant, view southeast.



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**Photo 43**

Restaurant bar, view north.



**Photo 44**

Main entrance to former restaurant, view northwest.





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**Photo 45**

Detail of decorative wall paneling near main restaurant entrance, view west.



**Photo 46**

Secondary restaurant entry on northeast elevation, view north.





Longhorn Ballroom, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

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**Photo 47**

Former first-floor restaurant, view west.



**Photo 48**

Door from former first-floor restaurant to exterior covered walkway on northeast elevation, view southeast.



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**Photo 49**

First-floor tenant space, view north.



**Photo 50**

Second-floor tenant space, view southeast.





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**Photo 51**

Second-floor tenant space with new buildout (c. 2023), view west. Note the existing faux window and door infills (left) along the southwest balcony elevation.



**Photo 52**

Second-floor apartment buildout (c. 2023), view south.



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**Photo 53**

First-floor restaurant tenant space with new buildout (c. 2023), view south.



*- end -*