

H # 28
42

Dallas Landmark Commission Landmark Nomination Form

1. Name

historic Cumberland Hill School
and/or common same

2. Location

address 1901 North Akard Street land survey Grigsby
location/neighborhood CBD block,lot,tract 520,6 tract size less than 1 ac

3. Current Zoning

CA-1

4. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in progress	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other

5. Ownership

Current Owner: B. Gill Clements Phone:
Address: 1901 N. Akard City: Dallas State: TX Zip Code: 75201

6. Form Preparation

Name & Title Jackie McElhany Organization Designation Task Force
Contact Ron Emrich, H.P. Officer Phone 214/670-4121

7. Representation on Existing Surveys

Alexander Survey (citywide)	<input type="checkbox"/> local <input type="checkbox"/> state <input type="checkbox"/> national	<input type="checkbox"/> National Register
H.P.L. Survey (CBD)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> A <input type="checkbox"/> B <input type="checkbox"/> C <input type="checkbox"/> D	<input type="checkbox"/> Recorded Tx Historic Ldmk
1985 Historic Resource	<input type="checkbox"/> high <input type="checkbox"/> medium	<input type="checkbox"/> Tx Archaeological Ldmk
Oak Cliff	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Victorian Survey	<input type="checkbox"/>	
1987 Historic Resource	<input type="checkbox"/> high <input type="checkbox"/> medium Other _____	

For Office Use Only

8. Date Rec'd: 6/1/03 Survey Verified by N, by [signature] 9. Field Check by: [signature]

10. Nomination:

<input type="checkbox"/> Archaeological	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structure(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> District
<input type="checkbox"/> Site	<input type="checkbox"/> Structure & Site	<input type="checkbox"/> Petitions needed

11. Historic Ownership

original owner Dallas Board of Education
significant later owner(s)

12. Construction Dates

original 1889
alterations/additions after 1892, after 1899, 1971

13. Architect

original construction Alonzo B. Bristol & Cortez Clark
alterations/additions early: unknown; 1971: Burson & Hendricks

14. Site Features

natural small lawn & mature trees, surrounded by iron fence
urban design prominent corner lot on slight rise, north edge of CBD

15. Physical Description

Condition	Check One:		Check One:
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved (date: _____)
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

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

The Cumberland Hill School is located on the northwest corner of Akard (originally School) and Munger (originally Caruth) Streets in downtown Dallas. The two story brick structure with raised basement is oriented along Akard Street; as its name implies, its site is at the crown of a (once more prominent) hill, on the north edge of the current central business district. Constructed in stages beginning in 1888, the building has changed a number of times in its history as it was expanded for increasing educational needs, and in the 1970s, adaptively reused for office space.

Originally, the tall, two story structure was essentially square in plan, four large classrooms surrounding a central stairwell on each floor. Segmental arched windows, originally 6 x 6 and now 12 x 12, pierce the walls of rose, cream and red brick, now painted a dim ochre. A complex, steeply pitched hip roof was topped by an open, stick style cupola, while the corner entry, oriented toward the Akard and Munger intersection, was shaded by a turned spindle-supported porch. A two story brick wing providing additional classroom space and detailed similarly was added to the south after 1892, while a somewhat less exuberantly designed north wing of two stories was added between 1899 and 1905. By 1910, the cupola had been removed from the original portion of the structure, and by 1915, the steep roofs had been replaced by a flat roof and a castle-like crenellated parapet. The Eastlake-style corner entry porch was supplanted by a brick, covered porch of vaguely Tudor influence.

Continuation Sheet

Item # 15

Page 2 of 2

The 1971 renovation of the structure removed the crenellated parapet and returned a freely interpreted combination hipped and mansard roof with a stylized cupola to the building. Streamlined iron railings and posts create entry porches at several locations around the exterior, wrapping the three sides of an eastward-projecting wing on the main, Akard Street elevation.

16. Historical Significance

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

The Cumberland Hill School, constructed in 1889 on the site of an earlier public school structure, represents the last vestige of nineteenth century educational facilities in Dallas. For 70 years the structure served as an elementary school, providing education to children of a score of nationalities and races. Countless community leaders, educators and prominent citizens attended the downtown school. The original building design, executed by significant early Dallas architects Bristol and Clark, has been altered several times as the building was expanded. It continues, however, to reflect late nineteenth century Italianate commercial and institutional design influences; few examples remain in Dallas of this once common architectural style. Cumberland, along with the 1890 County Courthouse ("Old Red," West End Historic District), are the only remaining large scale public or commercial buildings in Dallas constructed prior to 1900.

The Cumberland Hill School is the third school structure to occupy the site on North Akard Street in downtown Dallas. The first building was erected prior to the Civil War by the Cumberland Presbyterian Church to house its school; its elevation above the fledgling city to the west gave the site its name: Cumberland Hill.

Education in Dallas County had been provided to a select few youngsters primarily through religious institutions until 1877, when the city government took charge, making certain that schools were established and teachers hired in each of the city's four wards. The city acquired the school on Cumberland Hill in 1880-81, designating it as Ward Two School, but replaced it with a new, larger structure in 1883, at a cost of \$1,900, in the same year that a special tax was levied citywide to build new, two story schoolhouses to provide free public education in

17. Bibliography

Dallas City Directories, 1889-1925; MacDonald, Dallas Rediscovered; Minutes of the Dallas City Council; Annual Reports, Board of Education; Sanborn Insurance Maps; Acheson, Dallas Yesterday; Dealey, Diaper Days of Dallas

18. Attachments

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> District or Site map | <input type="checkbox"/> Additional descriptive material |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site Plan | <input type="checkbox"/> Footnotes |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photos (historic & current) | |

Continuation Sheet

Item. # 16

Page 2 of 3

each ward. In 1884, the Dallas Board of Education was formed, creating an independent public school system to manage the four existing "white" schools (including Cumberland Hill, School #2) and two "colored" schools. The new Ward Two School was rapidly filled to overflowing, as were all the city's schools by the mid-1880s. The School Board responded in January, 1888 by asking that the City Council authorize construction of a new, eight-room facility on Cumberland Hill. The Council approved a contract with M.K. Wright for \$19,675 in April, 1888, and in January of 1889 architects Bristol and Clark reported to the City Council that the building was ready for occupancy.

Architect Alonzo B. Bristol and his partner Cortez Clark were responsible for the design of a number of important business and residential structures in Dallas in the 1880s. Cleveland-trained Bristol, who had come to Dallas after practicing in Houston for several years, planned the unique and imposing Dallas City Hall at the corner of Akard and Commerce Streets (demolished in 1912 to make way for the Hotel Adolphus) in the same year as the Cumberland Hill project, as well as Cumberland's almost identical twin schoolhouse, Oak Grove, School #4, which was located at Harwood and Jackson Streets (demolished 1915). The original Sanger Brothers department store, the Blankenship and Blake Co. headquarters building, and the imposing St. Mary's (Episcopal) College on upper Ross Avenue, all now demolished, were among Bristol's other significant commercial commissions.

On February 2, 1889, School Board President C.A. Gill reported that "...the new and elegant School Building named and to be known as Cumberland Hill was occupied on the 21st with about 400 pupils in attendance.... The heating furnaces are entirely satisfactory and everything is all O.K." The old frame Ward Two School was then moved to the corner of Alamo and Welborn Streets to serve as a schoolhouse for black children.

The new Cumberland Hill School drew its students from all economic groups. It was, according to Dallas Morning News publisher Ted Dealey "a melting pot of nationalities, religions and sects." Students were drawn from the "silk stocking district" along Ross Avenue as well as enclaves of immigrant families who lived north of the school along McKinney Avenue and in the area later known as "Little Mexico."

Continuation Sheet

Item # 16

Page 3 of 3

As the school age population continued to increase, additions to the building were required after 1892 and 1899, as shown in the Sanborn Insurance Maps.

The melting pot label was applied to Cumberland Hill in 1925 when the Dallas Morning News featured it in an article, "Speaking the League of Nations." Claiming that "no school in Texas can boast of such a diversity of races as is gathered together here," the article described Mexican, German, Jewish, Irish, Italian, Spanish, Greek, Dutch, French, Norwegian, Indian, Danish, Chinese, Russian, Japanese, Panamanian, Canadian and Central American students. The outstanding departments in the school, according to the News article, were home economics and manual training. Most interesting of all, it noted, were the geography lessons at Cumberland. Instead of reading "dry textbooks," the children told their classmates about their homelands, from Shanghai to Petrograd, from the shrines of India to the dikes of Holland.

The school began to lose its student population as the city moved north after World War II and residential areas were replaced by commercial districts. Closed as an elementary school in 1958 when W.B. Travis School opened on McKinney Avenue, for the next three years it served as an annex of the Dallas Vocational School, with its classrooms filled with instructional equipment. The building was first offered for sale in 1961, and in 1969 was purchased by SEDCO, Inc. for \$1,362,000. Renovated in 1971 for office use, the school building's existing flat roof and crenellated parapet were replaced by a pitched roof and cupola suggesting the design of the original 1889 portion of the structure. It remains as a private office building.

Today, Cumberland Hill School offers citizens of Dallas a glimpse of a nineteenth century schoolhouse, built when the promise of the city and the ambitions of its citizens prompted the construction of several two-story brick school buildings.