

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

**1. NAME OF PROPERTY**

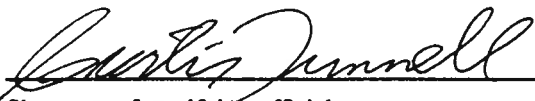
**HISTORIC NAME:** Fannin, James W., Elementary School  
**OTHER NAME/SITE NUMBER:** Phase IV-East Dallas DAL/DA 185

**2. LOCATION**

<b>STREET &amp; NUMBER:</b> 4800 Ross Avenue		<b>NOT FOR PUBLICATION:</b> N/A	
<b>CITY OR TOWN:</b> Dallas		<b>VICINITY:</b> N/A	
<b>STATE:</b> Texas	<b>CODE:</b> TX	<b>COUNTY:</b> Dallas	<b>CODE:</b> 113
		<b>ZIP CODE:</b> 75204	

**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  nationally  statewide  locally. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)



14 Feb. 1995

Signature of certifying official

Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Texas Historical Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  
(  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other (explain): _____	_____	_____

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**5. CLASSIFICATION**

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**OWNERSHIP OF PROPERTY:** Public

**CATEGORY OF PROPERTY:** Building

<b>NUMBER OF RESOURCES WITHIN PROPERTY:</b>	<b>CONTRIBUTING</b>	<b>NONCONTRIBUTING</b>
	1	0 BUILDINGS
	0	0 SITES
	0	0 STRUCTURES
	0	0 OBJECTS
	1	0 TOTAL

**NUMBER OF CONTRIBUTING RESOURCES PREVIOUSLY LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER:** 0

**NAME OF RELATED MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING:** Historic and Architectural Resources of East and South Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

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**6. FUNCTION OR USE**

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**HISTORIC FUNCTIONS:** EDUCATION: School

**CURRENT FUNCTIONS:** EDUCATION: School

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**7. DESCRIPTION**

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**ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION:** LATE 19TH AND EARLY 20TH CENTURY MOVEMENTS: Tudor Revival

**MATERIALS:** FOUNDATION Concrete  
WALLS Brick  
ROOF Concrete  
OTHER Wood; Glass

**NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION** (see continuation sheets 7-5 through 7-6).

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**8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE**

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**APPLICABLE NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA**

- A** PROPERTY IS ASSOCIATED WITH EVENTS THAT HAVE MADE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE BROAD PATTERNS OF OUR HISTORY.
- B** PROPERTY IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE LIVES OF PERSONS SIGNIFICANT IN OUR PAST.
- C** PROPERTY EMBODIES THE DISTINCTIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF A TYPE, PERIOD, OR METHOD OF CONSTRUCTION OR REPRESENTS THE WORK OF A MASTER, OR POSSESSES HIGH ARTISTIC VALUE, OR REPRESENTS A SIGNIFICANT AND DISTINGUISHABLE ENTITY WHOSE COMPONENTS LACK INDIVIDUAL DISTINCTION.
- D** PROPERTY HAS YIELDED, OR IS LIKELY TO YIELD, INFORMATION IMPORTANT IN PREHISTORY OR HISTORY.

**CRITERIA CONSIDERATIONS:** N/A

**AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE:** Architecture

**PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE:** 1915

**SIGNIFICANT DATES:** 1915

**SIGNIFICANT PERSON:** N/A

**CULTURAL AFFILIATION:** N/A

**ARCHITECT/BUILDER:** Lang & Witchell (architects, Dallas)

**NARRATIVE STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE** (see continuation sheets 8-7 through 8-8).

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**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHIC REFERENCES**

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**BIBLIOGRAPHY** (see Section I).

**PREVIOUS DOCUMENTATION ON FILE (NPS):** N/A

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- 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*)
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

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**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

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**ACREAGE OF PROPERTY:** 2.2 acres

<b>UTM REFERENCES</b>	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Easting</b>	<b>Northing</b>	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Easting</b>	<b>Northing</b>
1	14	708280	3631700	3	##	#####
2	##	#####	#####	4	##	#####

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION** (See continuation sheet 10-9)

**BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION** (See continuation sheet 10-9)

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**11. FORM PREPARED BY** (with assistance from Dwayne Jones, THC)

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**NAME/TITLE:** Daniel Hardy/Terri Myers

**ORGANIZATION:** Hardy-Heck-Moore    **DATE:** 7/91; 9/94

**STREET & NUMBER:** 2112 Rio Grande Street    **TELEPHONE:** (512) 478-8014

**CITY OR TOWN:** Austin    **STATE:** TX    **ZIP CODE:** 78705

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**ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION**

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**CONTINUATION SHEETS**

**MAPS**

**PHOTOGRAPHS**

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS**

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**PROPERTY OWNER**

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**NAME** Dallas Independent School District

**STREET & NUMBER** 3700 Ross Avenue    **TELEPHONE** N/A

**CITY OR TOWN** Dallas    **STATE** TX    **ZIP CODE** 75204

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**Description**

The James W. Fannin Elementary School, at 4800 Ross Avenue, is a 3-story institutional building that is difficult to categorize into a single architectural stylistic classification but it displays some elements that are associated with the Late Gothic Revival. Nevertheless, the building has a modified rectangular plan and a flat or slightly inclined roof. The walls are finished with brick and cast stone. The focus of the elaborately detailed facade is a projecting central bay with five distinct vertical divisions. Located in a mostly commercial area of East Dallas, the school is adjacent to a residential area with both single-family dwellings built between 1905 and 1920, and multi-family apartment buildings built in the 1920s and 1930s. The James W. Fannin Elementary School is in good condition and retains much of its architectural integrity. Only a minimal amount of nonhistoric changes have been completed on the front and side elevations. The most noticeable changes are the enclosures of some ground-floor openings. A major addition extends from the back wall, but the architects of this new wing have attempted to echo some of the prominent physical features of the original building.

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The James W. Fannin Elementary School stands on a relatively level lot at the southeast corner of Ross and Prairie Avenues. There are minimal landscaping features on the property, most notably a row of shrubs along the base of the front and along the concrete sidewalks. According to Sanborn maps, the school has concrete-frame construction with brick curtain walls. The front of the school, which faces northwest and has a tripartite composition, has two entrances located at each end of the projecting central bay. A stuccoed or cast-stone water table marks the slightly raised foundation, while another, wider, cast-stone, belt course at the first floor delineates the base of the 3-part facade. Cast-stone detailing is used extensively as a decorative detail, especially on the facade. The 6/6 light windows on the second and third floors have cast-stone spandrels or slightly recessed brick panels. Three-light transoms cap each of these window openings. The parapet wall, which crowns the 3-part facade, is elaborately detailed with cast-stone cartouches, stepped coping, and both vertical and horizontal frames. The side elevations display detailing that is similar to, but more subdued than, that seen on the facade. A large addition has been built onto the rear of the school and it is compatible to the original design.

An attached former residence is northeast of the school. This wing, which houses meeting rooms and offices for the Parent-Teacher Association, is a 2-story brick-faced domestic building with Prairie School detailing. A ceramic tile, hipped roof caps the building, which has a 1-story porch on the front. The house is attached to the school by a

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stuccoed addition which extends to the southeast. The only significant alteration on the house's facade is the enclosure of the porch on the first floor; however, the building retains sufficient integrity to be classified as a contributing element.

Temporary classrooms have been moved onto the property, just east of the school. These rooms are portable buildings that detract from the overall historic character of the school and, because they are adjoined together and are considered to be a single building, are classified as a noncontributing element.

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## Significance

James W. Fannin Elementary School, at the far eastern boundary of old East Dallas, is one of Dallas's oldest and most intact educational institutional buildings. Though the impressive 3-story brick school building defies easy classification as an example of a single architectural style or movement, it displays Late Gothic Revival features and retains much of its original 1915 character. Therefore, it is nominated to the National Register under Criterion C in the area of Architecture, and is associated with the historic context, The Development of East and South Dallas: 1872-1945.

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Fannin School was the second part of a two-building complex that was named for James W. Fannin. The first school building, which faced San Jacinto Street, was constructed in 1908 during a population boom that took Dallas from a city of 42,638 in 1900 to 158,976 by 1920. The proliferation of streetcar suburbs in East Dallas during the first decades of the century resulted in increased numbers of school-aged children in the area, and prompted the construction of the second Fannin School in 1915 on the northern half of the block. It is the second school, which faces Ross Avenue, that remains standing. The 1921 Sanborn map of the area shows both buildings in use as "Fannin Public School" but the earlier school building was demolished in the 1980s.

Unabated growth in the East Dallas area continued through the 1920s, prompting the school board to acquire the private residence to the east of the complex, at 4830 N. Ross, for use as a library and music room by Fannin Elementary students. The lot on which the extant, ca. 1912, 2-story brick-veneer house is sited, was the only lot on the block not related to Fannin School when the school system purchased it about 1928. Since that time all of block 702 has been used for educational purposes. The house is connected to the school by a walkway, and is used as offices and meeting rooms by the P.T.A.

R.S. Randell was principal of Fannin School when the new building opened in 1915. He was succeeded the following year by Julius Dorsey, who later served as superintendent of the Dallas Public School system. Later principals include E.B. Comstock (1920) and S. E. Gideon (1935). Fannin School continues to be used by the Dallas Independent School District as an elementary school.

Today, the James W. Fannin Elementary School is one of Dallas' oldest educational buildings. Although many of the city's historic schools are extant, relatively few have survived with their historic integrity intact. The James W. Fannin Elementary School is one

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such example, despite the recent completion of a major addition onto the rear. The school is also significant for its eclectic architectural design, which has elements that are suggestive of the Gothic Revival style. Most of the city's schools built during the first part of the 20th century displayed classically influenced detailing, yet the Fannin School is unique for its Gothic Revival-inspired design.

The school's original designer was the well-known architectural firm, Lang & Witchell, one of Dallas' most prolific architectural firms during the early 20th century. Lang and Witchell was commissioned to design numerous buildings throughout Texas' larger cities, and several are listed in the National Register, including the Beaux Arts-style Harris County Courthouse (1902-10) in Houston, and the Sullivan-esque-detailed Sanger Brothers Building (1910) in Dallas. The firm was one of the largest and most influential in the state during the early 20th century, and their work is most visible in Dallas. William McDonald noted in Dallas Rediscovered: "Between 1910 and 1942, the firm dominated Dallas construction and made such a profound and indelible visual impact that its influence still constitutes a major portion of the Dallas skyline" (McDonald, 1978:92). Therefore, it is not surprising that Lang & Witchell presented an innovative design for the Fannin School.

The Prairie School-influenced house, which is attached to the school building, has been associated with the school as early as 1921 when Sanborn maps noted that the house was converted into a music room and library for the school. Consequently, the house is considered a contributing element, unlike the temporary classroom building to the rear of the property, which is classified as a noncontributing element.



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### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

All of City Block 3/702 bounded by Ross Avenue on the northwest, Fitzhugh Avenue on the northeast, San Jacinto Street on the southeast, and Prairie Avenue on the southwest.

### JUSTIFICATION OF BOUNDARIES

Property includes the area historically associated with the building. Also included is the rear yard of the school, where the 1908 Fannin School was constructed facing San Jacinto, now used as a school yard.