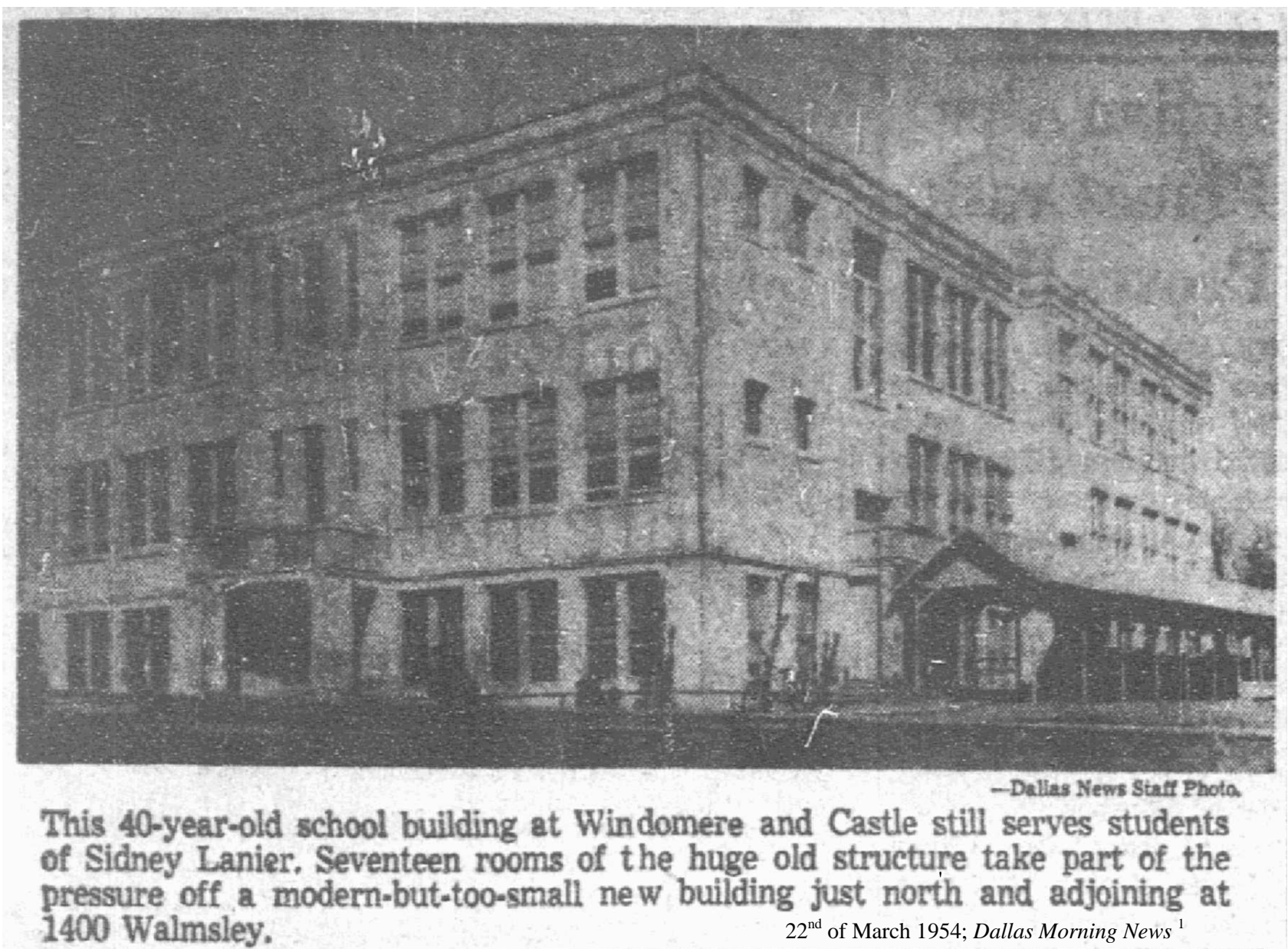


WEST DALLAS PUBLIC SCHOOL

James D. Barnes, 5th January 2026 – last revised 8th January 2026

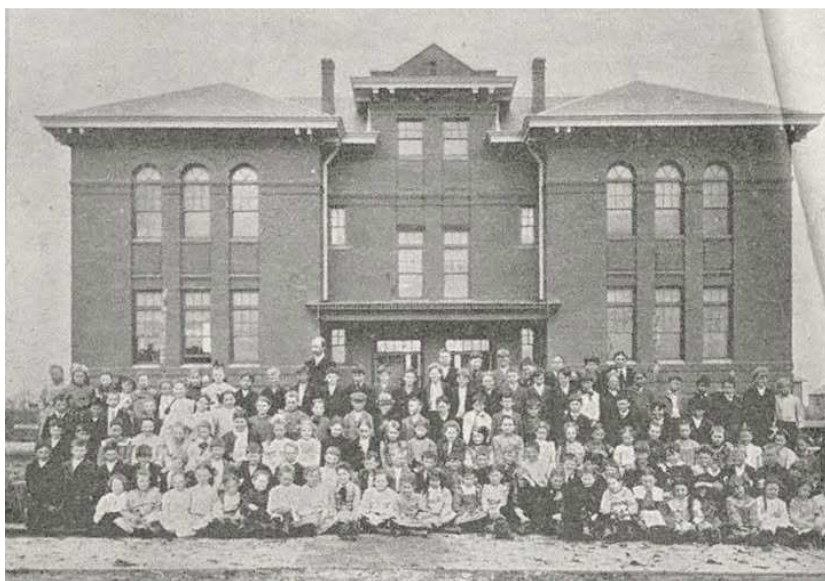


Above appears the only photograph I have been able to find of the *West Dallas Public School* building. I recall reading somewhere that it had been designed by architect James E. Flanders and built in 1894 – facts which I am now unable to document but which seem to be correct.² As I recall, this building was demolished in the mid-1970s.

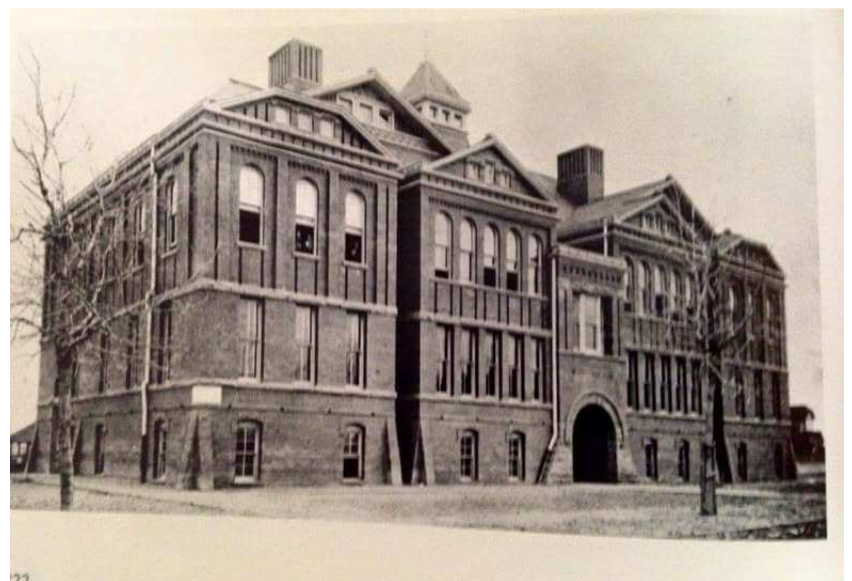
A vote by the West Dallas neighborhood to incorporate a school district was initially annulled in the Courts, but eventually the proposition was re-balloted, passed, and bonds were sold for the new school.³ That's the most organization this suburban neighborhood would ever accept – craving independence and freedom from municipal taxation.

What appears above is both the original 1894 brick fabrication, seen on the left, plus extensive interior remodel and addition in 1914, seen on the right.⁴ (The camera was pointing northwest from the corner of Castle and Windomere.) James E. Flanders was living nearby at the time this building was constructed, practicing architecture in an office in downtown Dallas.⁵ The new building was placed on a site inside his *Flanders Heights* addition. It seems highly improbable that any other architect would have been employed to design this new neighborhood school building.

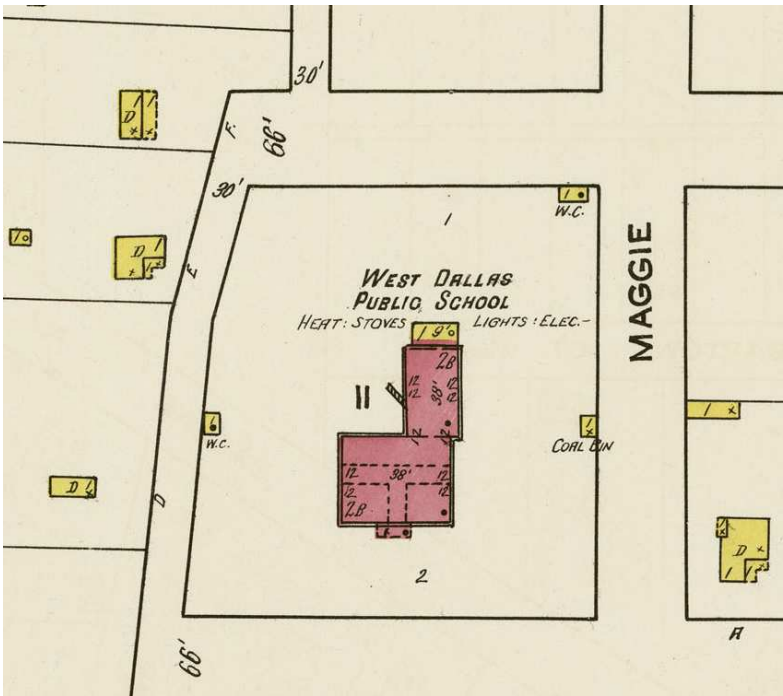
My guess is that this West Dallas Public School building originally had a sloped tile-shingle roof – similar to other schools designed by James E. Flanders.



1905: John Reagan Elementary School; Dallas



1893: Oak Cliff High School



Detail from a 1922 Sanborn Insurance map⁶ showing the 1894 brick West Dallas Public School building with its 1914 addition wing.

West Dallas Public School was called various other names: *West Dallas High School*, *Western Heights Public School*, then *Sidney Lanier Elementary School*.

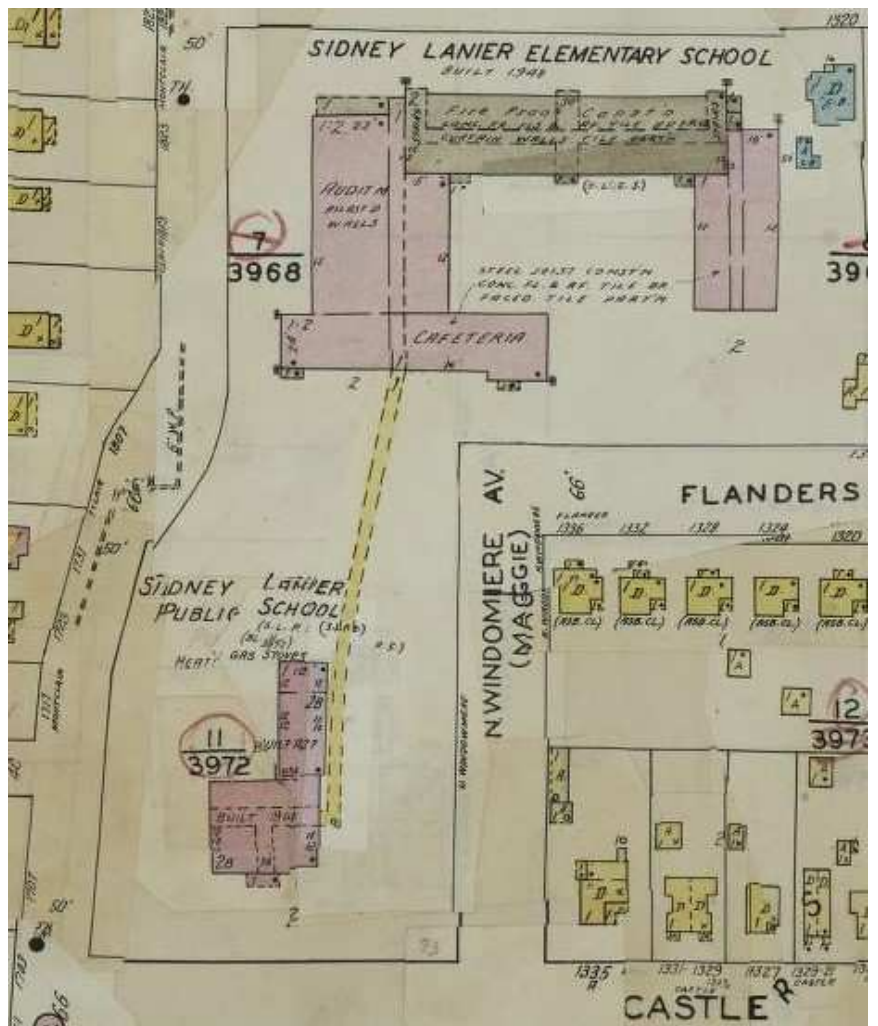
My research findings about this building are disappointingly sparse. I am unable to find any deed whereby the West Dallas school corporation ever bought this site (or whereby James Flanders ever sold it).

The last *West Dallas High School* class graduated in June of 1927.⁸ The City of Dallas, at first hesitating when it discovered that West Dallas school corporation was in debt⁹, nevertheless went ahead and annexed the Western Heights neighborhood into the City of Dallas that year.⁹ Western Heights' school system was annexed into the Dallas Independent School system at that time.¹⁰ The *West Dallas Public School* building, then 32 years old, remained in use for only the elementary grades, under a new name: *Sidney Lanier Elementary School*.¹¹

Land to be used as an adjacent new school site was purchased in 1938 and 1946.¹² Dallas architect Mark Lemmon was hired to design a new building for *Sidney Lanier Elementary School* in 1946.¹³ The new building was opened for use in the fall of 1949.¹⁴ It had been planned for the old brick building to be demolished when this new *Sidney Lanier* school opened, but the population of the area had grown so rapidly that a few classrooms in the old building continued in use for years afterward.¹⁵

Historically, the man Sidney Lanier had been known as a poet – a one-time literature professor at *John Hopkins University* in Baltimore; but, he had also served as a private in the Confederate army. Therefore in the fall of 2021, the school's name was changed to *Jesus Moroles Expressive Vanguard*.¹⁶

Earlier school buildings had been in the William Coombes Survey. Public education was one of the first programs established by the Republic of Texas. A school would have started here for the children of William N. Coombes shortly after he arrived in 1843. The most famous of those earlier public schools in this neighborhood was ***Mount Airy Academy*** (or the *Mount Airy* schoolhouse), first mentioned by name in the *Dallas Morning News* in 1886,¹⁷ and probably serving until the 1895 opening of the three story brick *West Dallas Public School*. Multifunctionally used as a public school, for Sunday church services, as a local election polling place, and as the assembly hall for community meetings, it seems to have given the neighborhood its short-lived *Mount Airy* name. There are no drawings or photographs of any of these earlier school buildings; nor are their exact locations known, though there is sketchy evidence that the *Mount Airy Academy* might have stood along the south side of Fort Worth Avenue, somewhere between Willomet and Chappell.¹⁸



Detail from a 1950 Sanborn Insurance map⁷ showing the old brick West Dallas Public School building and the 1948 Sidney Lanier Elementary School building which replaced it.

FOOTNOTES:

1. 1954-March-22nd; *Dallas Morning News*; page 9; by William Allen Ward; *Oak Cliff Schools Make Comebacks*.
2. 1895-August-18th; *Dallas Mornng News*, page 16; *West Dallas School Board*.
3. 1892-February 25th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 3; *Records of the Courts* – The Courts approve a school district incorporation election.
1892-July-10th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 16; *West Dallas Votes*. – School tax referendum passed.
1892-August-6th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 3; *An Interesting Law Suit* – A lawsuit is filed, citing election irregularities.
1892-September-16th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 7; *Advertisement* – The lawsuit is heard in Court.
1893-April-27th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 8; *Advertisement*.--The first election annulled by the Court, a second is planned.
1893-July- 15th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 10; *Advertisement*. – A second election is planned.
1893-July-16th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 12; *Local Notes*. – Second West Dallas school election is scheduled.
1893-August-3rd; *Dallas Morning News*: page 8; *West Dallas Election*. – perhaps erroneously, the vote is 40 to 1 against.
1893-October-19th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 8; *West Dallas Election*. -- The election reportedly passes overwhelmingly.
4. 1914-September-10th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 13; *Advertisement* – seeking bidders for West Dallas School construction work.
1914-September-15th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 16; *Western Heights School Opens* – the new school is expected to open within 60 days.
5. 1894- September 1st; *Dallas Morning News*; page 7; *Advertisement*.
6. Detail from: 1922 edition of the *Sanborn Insurance* maps, Dallas, Texas; Volume 5; Sheet 582.
7. Detail from: 1950 edition of the *Sanborn Insurance* maps, Dallas, Texas; Volume 5; Sheet 582.
8. 1927-June-4th; *Dallas Morning News*, page 13; *Four High Schools Conduct Commencement Exercises*.
9. 1927-May-26th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 13; *Western Heights Denied Annexation*.
10. 1927-09-07; *Dallas Morning News*; page 3; *School Area Allotted to City System*.
11. 1939-October-21st; *Dallas Morning News*; page 13; *Attended Old West Dallas Schools*.
12. 1938-March-23rd; *Dallas Morning News*; page 3; *Board Buys Land to Enlarge Tract at Forest School*.
1945-November 14th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 7; *School Deals Get City OK*
13. 1946-November-15th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 5; *New School Seen as Public Center*.
14. 1949- September-24th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 2; *Open Houses to be Held by New Schools*.
15. Same as *Note 1* above.
16. *Wikipedia.com* (internet site accessed 6th January 2026); article on: "Jesus Moroles".
17. 1886-August-27th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 8; *Local Notes*.
1886-October-10th; *Dallas Morning News*, page 4; *West Dallas Items*.
18. 1887-June-26th; *Dallas Morning News*; page 7; *West Dallas*.

(End of Footnotes)