

Second Church of Christ, Scientist, in Dallas, Texas

Notes regarding the Christian Science church on Colorado at Plymouth Road

12th March 2022 – Jim Barnes; and 9th April 2022--various revisions suggested by Kathryn Warren

The red brick church on the northeast corner of Colorado and Plymouth was built by *Second Church Christ, Scientist, in Dallas, Texas*, and their first services were held in April of 1951. Over the years attendance dwindled until the congregation sold the property to Bill and Chris Peirson in March of 1999; maintenance deterioration became visible a decade later. The building's future is now uncertain. A hundred years ago, Miss Annie L. Stevens had set aside this site as special.

Annie Stevens and brother, Walter, were born in their parents' farmhouse, located at today's *Middlebrook Place*, which her mother had sold as a 3-acre parcel in 1888.¹ After her mother's death in 1916, Annie L. Stevens inherited the remaining family lands. Next door, where the church now stands, Stevens carefully saved herself a 2/3 acre lot, separating it from her 1923 gift of land east of Plymouth Road dedicated to the creation of *Stevens Memorial Park*.² We do not know her dreams for this special site. It was still vacant when Miss Annie died in 1941.

Since its establishment in 1920, the Christian Science *Second Church* had outgrown its building on East 10th Street at Storey (a block in front of Adamson High School).³ So in 1947, six years after Annie Stevens' death, the congregation purchased the 2/3 acre parcel from her estate, rearranging lot boundaries to fit with Colorado Boulevard.⁴ The congregation hired a Fort Worth firm, *Wilson & Patterson*, as architects.⁵ Contractor Winston A. Colwell applied for the building permit in March 1950,⁶ and construction of the steel frame structure was completed the next year.⁷ Delightfully composed, beautifully proportioned, and immaculately detailed, the traditional style of the church has always been called "Colonial".⁸

The congregation planted a pair of live oak trees in the front, which inadvertently grew so big they obliterated the picturesque views of the church.⁹ In the 1960s Colorado was moved south.¹⁰

The congregation used the building for over fifty years. At first the parked automobiles of Sunday morning worshipers would line both sides of Plymouth and Colorado for a block or more. But over the years, attendance faded. A much diminished congregation sold the property in 1999¹¹ but was permitted to continue to hold services there, reorganized under the name *Christian Science Society*.¹² The new owners were William H. (Bill) Peirson Jr. and his wife, Chris, a pair of attorneys living nearby. Bill had grown up at 2022 Mayflower, where his sister, Elizabeth, and mother, Esther, continued to reside for a decade after his church purchase. Reasons for the Peirsons' purchase are unclear. While one report has Bill's mother among the aging congregation, another has none of the Peirsons participating in Christian Science.¹³

During the first decade of their ownership, the Peirsons permitted neighborhood meetings to be held in the church.¹⁴ At that time, the church was in fine shape, inside and out. In 2011 the property was included in the new *Stevens Park Conservation District*, designating that the site may be used for a church or single family dwelling.¹⁵ Other than these *Conservation District* ordinances, there has never been any landmark or preservation status put on the church.¹⁶ During the past decade the condition of the property has deteriorated. A burst water pipe flooded the interior during the "Valentine's Blizzard of 2021."¹⁷ All utilities for the building are now shut off.¹⁸ Neither the Christian Science Society nor the Peirsons answered any of my phone calls, emails, or letters requesting information about the history of the building.¹⁹ At this writing, the future of this beautiful building on land so precious to Annie Stevens remains uncertain.

Illustrated Footnotes:

for: **“Second Church of Christ, Scientist of Dallas, Texas: Notes regarding the Christian Science church on Colorado at Plymouth Road”**

In general: *The History of the William Myers Section*, by James D. Barnes, documents:

Establishment of Stevens Park Estates in **Volume 6: The ‘Embry Abstract’ (2002)**;

The Stevens family: in Volume 7: The ‘Miliken Archives’;

Volume 8: The ‘Chadwick Archives’ (2003); and Volume 14: Addenda (2009).

Two bound copies of this series of volumes were preserved at:

- (1) *Dallas Public Library*, downtown, 7th floor local history div., “Jim Barnes Collection”;
- (2) Dealey Library of the Dallas Historical Society.

Dallas County, Texas: Real Estate Deed Records:

1. Ownership history of *Middlebrook Place*:

1888, Dec. 3rd: Widow Mary Stevens sells 3 acres to J.T. Duncan – **Vol. 99, pp 191-192.**

1910 Oct. 1st: The Duncans sell to Dr. Edwin Middlebrook – **Vol. 487, p 165.**

1976, Apr. 26th: Heirs of Dr. Middlebrook sell to W.H. Williams – **Vol. 76081; 1027.**

1976, July 26th: W.H. Williams plats *Middlebrook Place*-- Vol. 76192, pp. 167-175.

2. Miss Annie L. Stevens transfers land to the City of Dallas for park use:

1923, Dec. 4th: Miss Annie L. Stevens gifts ~40 acres to City – **Vol. 1062, pp. 146-148.**

1925, June 15th: Miss Annie to City to adjust Plymouth – **Vol. 1206, pp. 615-617.**

1928, Feb. 14th: Miss Annie to City for park along Lauraette, etc. – **Vol. 1466, pp. 696-7.**

Map showing the Stevens farm with Miss Annie's specially set aside 2/3 acre parcel:



1870: Dr. John H. Stevens purchases 120 acres -- **red outline**

Existing roads: *Fort Worth Pike*, east to Dallas; *Cedar Hill Road* (later renamed *Wheatland Road*), running south – **turquoise lines**

c.1871: Stevens build their farmhouse (Walter born here in 1874, Annie in 1875) – **red star**

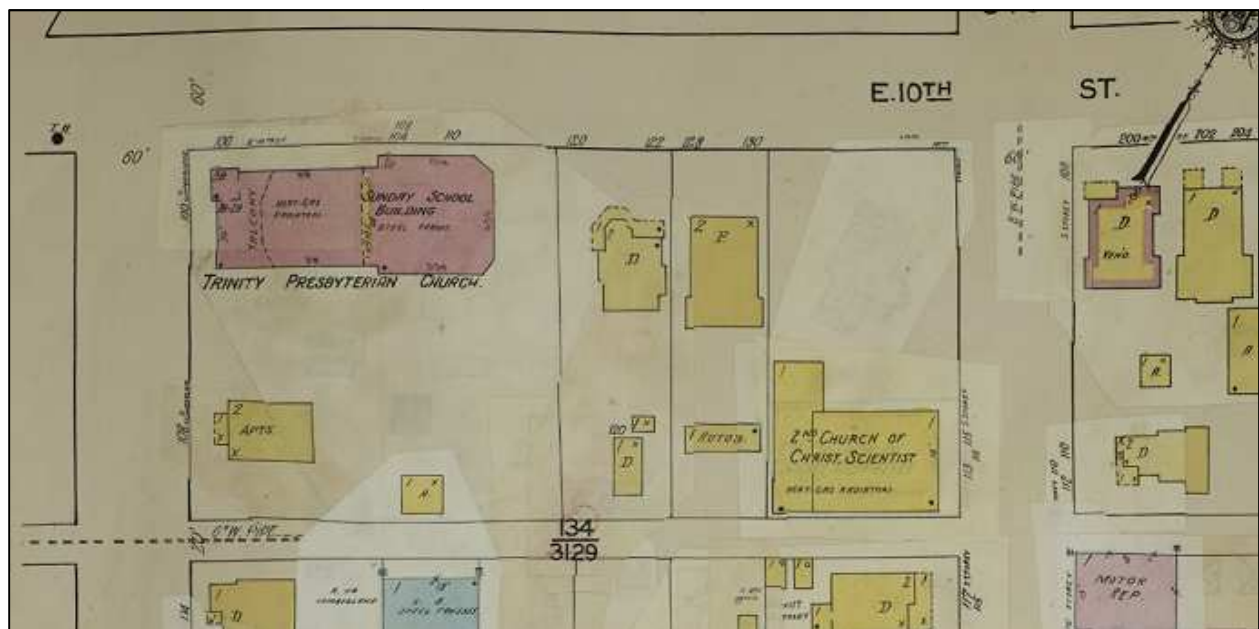
1888: Widow Stevens sells 3 acres to John Duncan, moves to East Dallas – **green outline**

1923: Miss Annie deeds everything east of *Wheatland Road* to City for park, everything west becomes *Stevens Park Estates*, leaving 2/3 acre for herself – **dark blue outline**.

3. Second Church of Christ, Scientist, in Dallas, Texas was organized in 1920, when the downtown First Church became overcrowded. Second Church has been the only Christian Science church congregation located west of the Trinity River in Dallas County. Its first building was located on the southwest corner of East 10th Street and Storey Avenue, a block in front of *Oak Cliff High School* (renamed *W.H. Adamson High School* in the 1930s).

After relocating to Stevens Park, until the mid1980s their **Christian Science Reading Room** provided service in downtown Oak Cliff -- at 316 West Jefferson Boulevard.

This map shows the original Second Church's building site:



Detail fragment from Sheet 522, Volume 5, year 1950 edition of the Sanborn Fire Insurance Map of Dallas, Dallas County, Texas; from the online webpage of the Library of Congress.

4. Miss Annie Stevens' 2/3 acre parcel is reconfigured for Second Church of Christ, Scientist:

1923, Dec. 4th: Miss Annie L. Stevens saves her special parcel– **Vol. 1062, pp. 146-148.**

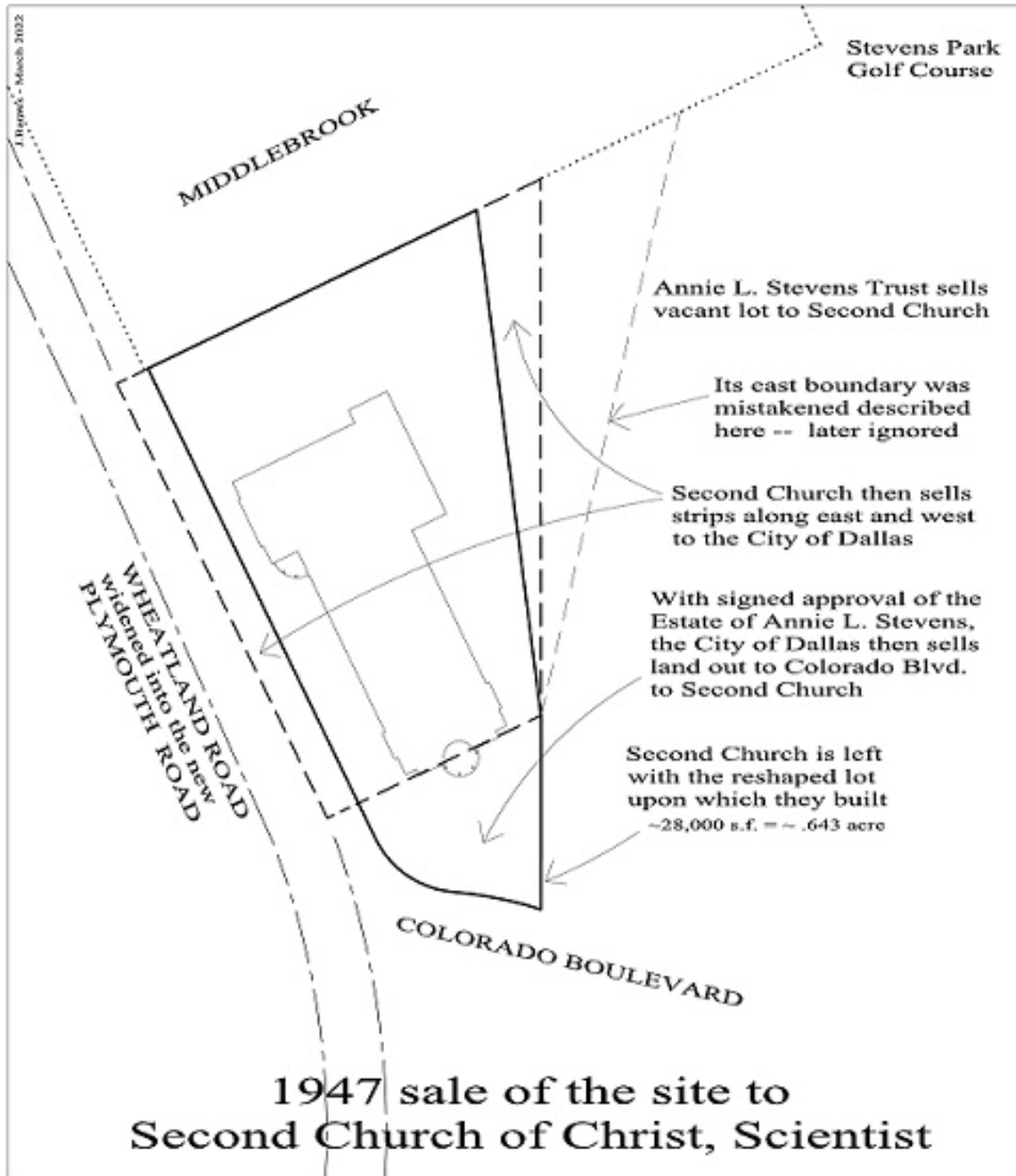
1947, Dec. 5th: Estate of Annie L Stevens sells to Second Church – **Vol. 2917, pp. 27-28.**

1947, Dec. 6th: Second Church to City of Dallas – Vol. 2916, pp. 471-472.

1947, Dec. 6th: Second Church to City of Dallas – Vol. 2916, pp. 473-474.

1947, Dec. 9th: City of Dallas to Second Church – Vol. 2917, pp. 18-21.

This transformed Miss Annie's ~30,000 s.f. parcel into a ~28,000 s.f. lot for the church.



5. “*Wilson and Patterson*” was chosen as architect for Second Church of Christ, Scientist



“Claude A. Slaughter, a sheet metal worker, receives a Craftsman Award from Edward L. Wilson, regional director of the American Institute of Architects”

(“1950s” – University of Texas at Arlington Libraries, Special Collections, <https://library.uta.edu/digitalgallery/> -- March 2022)

Second Church selected a Fort Worth architectural firm, “*Wilson and Patterson*”, to design their new church building at Stevens Park.

Edward Lawrence Wilson (c1899-1964) was a leader in the *American Institute of Architects*, serving as president of the *Texas Society of Architects* from 1950-1954, president of the *Texas Architectural Foundation* from 1955-1959, and filling two terms as national secretary. When he retired in 1964 his firm’s name had grown to “Wilson, Patterson, Snowden, Dunlap & Epperly”.

(DM: 1965-January-01—“Death of E.L. Wilson architect”)

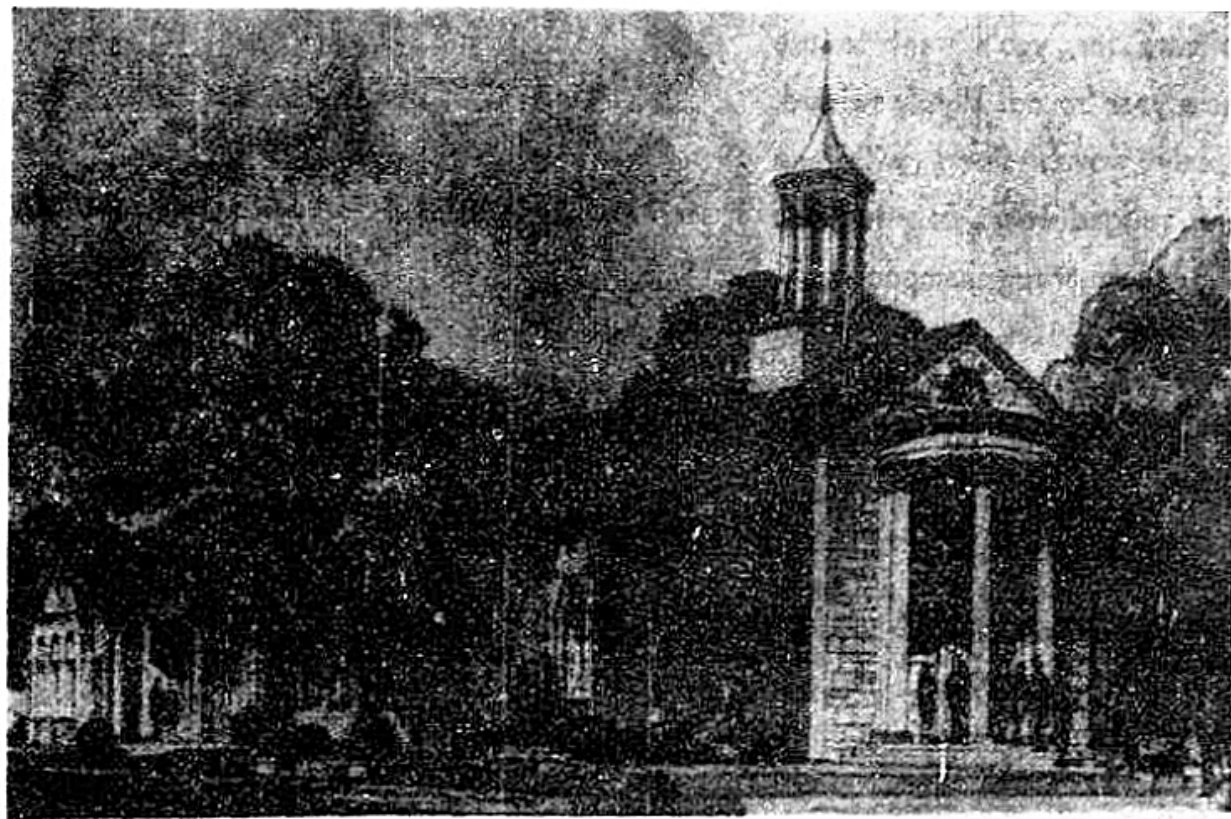
Wilson’ partner, **Joseph Julian Patterson** (1894-1976), is remembered as a skilled draftsman and interpreter of historical revival styles—a leading authority on traditional styles of ecclesiastical architecture. Patterson was a native of Illinois, but studied architecture at *Oklahoma A&M* in Stillwater, where he later taught, before moving to Fort Worth.

(*Handbook of Texas Online*: March 2022—“Joseph Julian Patterson”)

Though this firm designed many significant public buildings and houses across the region, Second Church of Christ, Scientist is their only work found in Dallas.

Winston A. Colwell's construction company built the Christian Science church on Colorado. The new sanctuary seated 460 people. The permit had a cost estimate of \$120,000 for Colwell's construction work. Newspaper accounts reported the overall project cost to be around \$165,000. Using *Department of Labor* indexed "cost of living" inflation values, those prices now would be: \$120,000 (1950) = ~\$1,40,000 (2022); and \$165,000 (1950) = ~\$1,925,000 (2022). The costs of real estate and construction have risen faster than the average "cost of living" however, and replicating this 1950 church project at today's prices would be significantly more expensive.

Neighbor Butch Weinberg recalled watching the church's steel frame being erected when he was small boy living across the street at 1155 North Plymouth. The *Dallas Central Appraisal District* website states that the building is "wood frame" but the 1950 building permit confirms Weinberg's infant memories of a steel skeleton.



—Dallas News Staff Photo.

Pictured here is the architect's sketch of a new building to be completed next fall at Colorado and Plymouth for the Second Church of Christ, Scientist, now located at Storey and Tenth.

© Copyright 2004, *The Dallas Morning News*: "Work Begun on Building for Church"; 12th of March 1950

Current Stevens Park Estates resident Greg Madrid reports a story he was told that his house at 1823 West Colorado had been built as the "parsonage" for the Christian Science church – around year 1954. My research casts doubts, but I can neither prove nor disprove this story.

6. "Permit" filed by the City of Dallas was dated 8th of March 1950.

After an hour and half of searching building records at the Jefferson Boulevard archives of the City of Dallas, staff could find no Drawings of Second Church in their files. (Febuary2022)

VALID ONLY WHEN ACCOMPANIED BY FEE RECEIPT

DIVISION OF BUILDING INSPECTION
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
CITY OF DALLAS, TEXAS
PERMIT
For the Erection, Enlarging, Repairing, Re-modeling of Buildings or Parts thereof as provided in the Dallas Building Ordinance

Block No. 3832
Lot No. 20160800
Place Sub. 905
Inspector 14
Permit No. 59649

Building 210
Fire Limits none
Occupancy B
Type Const. E
San. Map Page
Location 1240 N. FAY HIGHT RD.
Use Church - Sunday School Bldg.
Permit for 153'-9" x 74'-3" 1 story church w/ steeple frame roof, 1 story church bldg of cement.

Owner of Land Second Church of Christ Scientist 715 W. Jefferson
Owner of Improvements same
Contractor Weynton A. Colwell 6128 Morningdale
Plans by Wilson - Patterson
Remarks

FOUND. Basmt. Bldg. Ht. / Stys.
Ext. Walls Int. Fin. Floors
Roof Elec. \$ 6500.00 Elevators: \$
Heating: \$ Incl. Air Cond.: \$ Incl. Spkr. Sys. W-D: \$
Estimate Total Cost: \$ 120,000.00

PLANS, FEES, INCLUDED
W. CL. Baths
Htr. Gr. T.
Lav. Shower
H. Bldg.
Stairs
Value of Bldg. \$ 21,500.00
Application No. 59655
Checked and approved subject to provisions of Code "A" below.
CECIL A. FARRILL
Chief of Building Inspection
By *[Signature]*
Date 3-8-50
Total cu. ft.
Total sq. ft.
Sq. ft. add.
Val. cu. ft. 4-30-50
Val. sq. ft.
Total Val.
Add. Val. 6-30-50 WP
10-10-50 WP
1-9-51 WP
3-19-51 WP

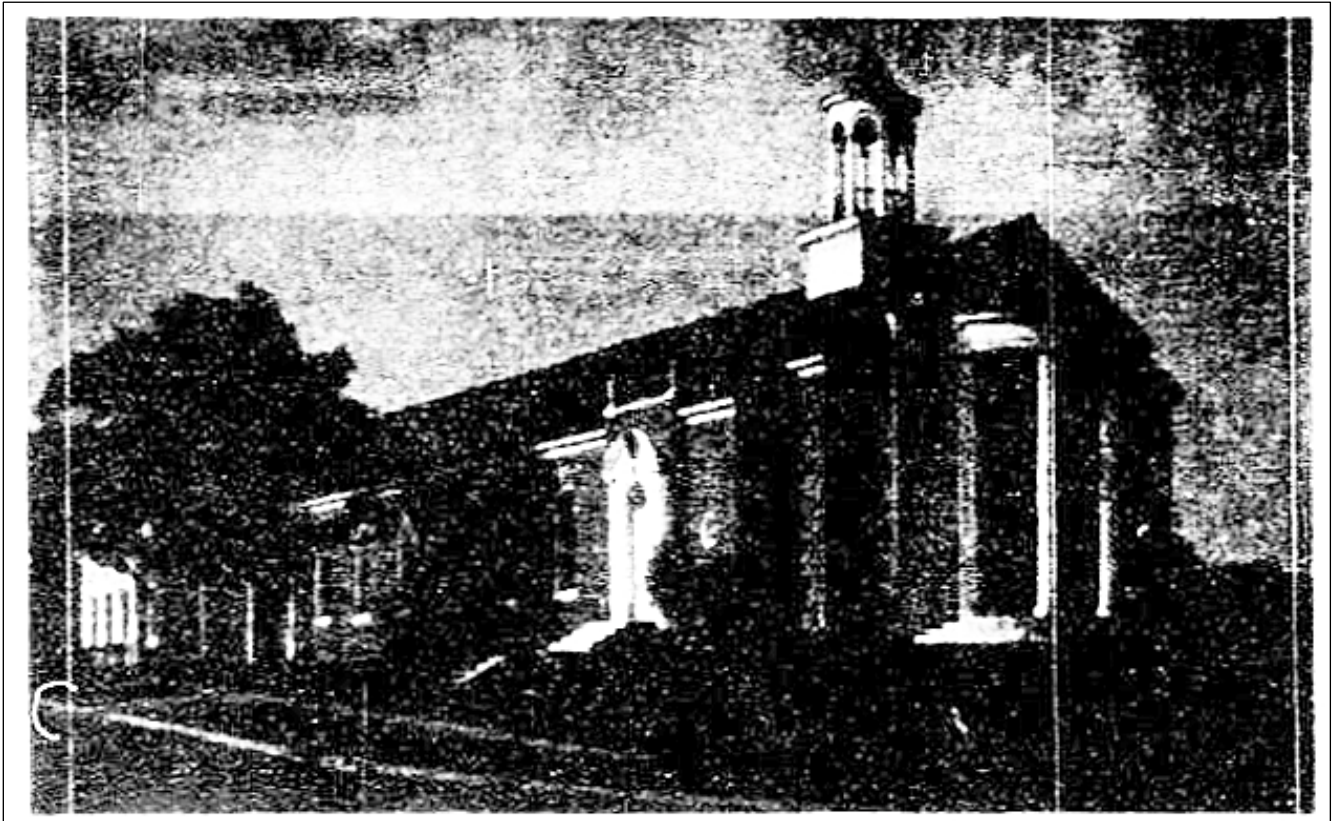
NOTE A: This permit issued on the basis of information furnished in the application noted by number herein, and is subject to property restrictions, provisions of the Building Code, Zoning Ordinances and all other governing ordinances which must be complied with, whether or not herein specified. This permit is subject to cancellation upon notice as provided in the Building Code.

I HEREBY ACCEPT ALL CONDITIONS HEREIN ABOVE MENTIONED AND CERTIFY THAT ALL STATEMENTS HEREIN RECORDED BY ME ARE TRUE.

Signed *Weynton A. Colwell* Permit Clerk
By *[Signature]* Date 3-8-50

CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY IS REQUIRED FOR ALL BUILDINGS ON CHANGE IN USE THEREOF
Form 30-1

7. *The Dallas Morning News* announced completion on the 21st of April 1951.



The Dallas Morning News: “Church of Christ, Scientist To Meet in New Building”; April 21, 1951, page 2.

8. Various views of the church building photographed by the author in year 2022:







9. Not long after construction was completed, the congregation planted a pair of live oak trees in front of their new church. Apparently intended to frame the cylindrical portico and steeple in greenery, the trees have inadvertently grown so big they obliterate views of the building.



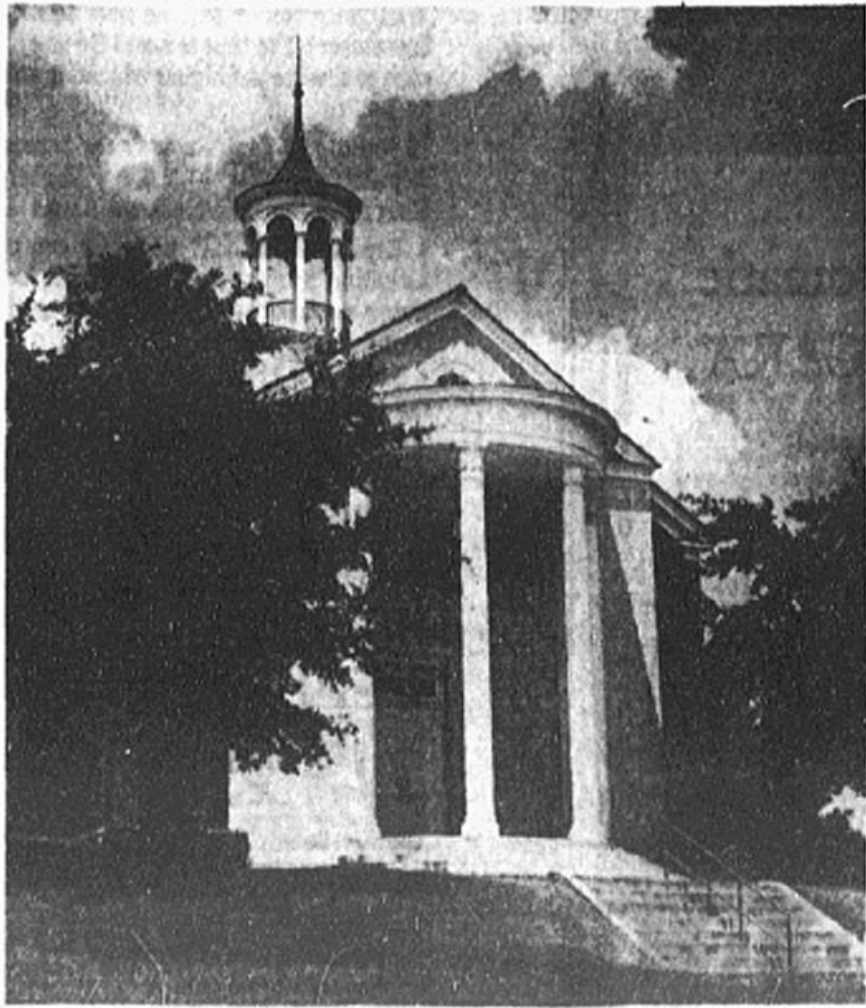
Undated (1952?) aerial photograph of Stevens Park showing no trees in front of the church.

(photo via Steve Bonner, who guessed the date as being 1952)



This 1955 newspaper advertisement drawing shows how the congregation apparently imagined their new trees would frame the view of their church's entry.

(Dallas Morning News: 1955-February-14)



The Second Church of Christ Scientist, one of 199 churches.

Left: 1961 photo showing trees and church at their visually balanced best.

(Dallas Morning News: 13th June 1961)

Lower Left: 1980 photo showing the trees closing in.

(Wallace, Steve. [Second Church of Christ Scientist, (Southeast elevation)], photograph, August 1980; accessed February 13, 2022), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Texas Historical Commission)

Lower Right: 2022 photo showing the front hidden by evergreen tree leaves.

(photo by author)



10. By the 1960s Colorado had become deadly. The original 1920s street had wider bends -- its pavement sloping downward at the outside of the curves (instead of banking upward to hold cars on the street). Crossing Coombes Creek on Colorado, increasingly speedy cars would go skidding into the bridge rails and sometimes crash down into the streambed. Finally the City rebuilt Colorado Boulevard from Plymouth Road across to Kensington Lane. Temporary grooves were first cut into the asphalt, to prevent further accidents. Then the pavement was all redone -- Colorado's bends were slightly straightened, and the outside of its curves banked. The result moved the edge of Colorado away from its original location in front of the church. This 1989 photograph, looking southeastward down the street, shows a "turn-in" created from a small remainder of the old pavement left at the church's front steps. During golf course renovations, started around 2009, this area was all resurfaced as a wide sidewalk.



(Texas Historical Commission. [Stevens Park], photograph, January 2, 1989; University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu> ; accessed February 13, 2022)

11. The deed whereby *Second Church of Christ, Scientist* sold their Stevens Park church property to William and Chris Peirson, is dated 26th of February 1999, and is filed in Dallas County Real Estate records: **Volume 9904, pp. 231-4.**

Second Church “granted, sold, and conveyed” the property for ‘Ten Dollars and other valuable consideration’ – a standard procedure used for keeping sales prices private data. There are no covenants in the deed granting the congregation any further use of the building.

Since the congregation continued to use the building, neighbors long supposed that the Peirsons were claiming tax exemption. But Dallas County records reveal that the Peirsons either never claimed an exemption, or were never granted any relief from normal taxation. To dispel this misconception, the history of the Peirsons’ tax payment is included here in full.

Property Taxes paid by Wm & Chris Peirson for 1200 North Plymouth Road

From the records of Dallas County (Records Building, 16th February 2022)

Year	Valuation	Total Amount Paid	Exemptions
1999	\$ 56,158	\$ 2,107.44	Pro Rata of Total
2000	\$ 306,400	\$ 11,312.24	none
2001	\$ 306,400	\$ 8,366.42	none
2002	\$ 306,400	\$ 8,587.87	none
2003	\$ 358,080	\$ 10,314.35	none
2004	\$ 375,920	\$ 12,678.58	none
2005	\$ 375,920	\$ 12,903.78	none
2006	\$ 375,920	\$ 11,414.79	none
2007	\$ 375,920	\$ 10,115.23	none
2008	\$ 375,920	\$ 10,275.51	none
		\$ 192.94	
2009	\$ 375,920	\$ 9,854.57	none
2010	\$ 375,920	\$ 10,891.81	none
2011	\$ 375,920	\$ 10,191.62	none
2012	\$ 375,920	\$ 10,265.46	none
2013	\$ 375,920	\$ 10,273.45	none
2014	\$ 375,920	\$ 10,311.32	none
2015	\$ 375,920	\$ 11,028.60	none
2016	\$ 375,920	\$ 500.00	none
		\$ 13,954.25	
2017	\$ 375,920	\$ 10,222.10	none
2018	\$ 375,920	\$ 10,695.80	none
2019	\$ 375,920	\$ 10,276.08	none
2020	\$ 375,920	\$ 10,198.24	none
Sub-total: Past payments:		\$ 226,932.45	
Currently due, but not yet received:			
2021	\$ 375,920	\$ 10,610.91	none
Grand Total: Paid + due:		\$ 237,543.36	

12. An online encyclopedia, *Wikipedia*, in its article “*List of former Christian Science churches, societies and buildings*” (March 2022) states that Christian Science congregations are “prohibited by the *Manual of The Mother Church* from publishing membership figures”. Christian Science churches across America are disappearing without announcement. The official publication of the denomination, *The Christian Science Journal*, lists all active congregations; and *Wikipedia* documents that Second Church in Dallas has stopped being listed in the *Journal*, since at least year 2007.

“Societies” in the national denomination are designated as smaller groups than “churches”. The sign presently in the lawn at Colorado and Plymouth advertises the name *Christian Science Society*. The archives of *The Dallas Morning News* has that name in use long before Second Church was organized, but the title now is being employed for the small number of members of the former Second Church congregation still active after the property was sold.

Both the *Second Christ of Christ, Scientist, in Dallas, Texas* and the *Christian Science Society* of Dallas, Texas are non-profit corporations still actively in existence as entities. Both use 1755 West Colorado Boulevard as their street address. Both use the same phone number. The Society is said on the internet to hold regular Sunday morning and Wednesday evening services. But cars are no longer seen in the church parking lot, and with all utilities now turned off at the building, it seems highly unlikely that any meetings are being held inside.

“*opencorporates.com*”—and --*christiansciencetexas.org/north-texas-area-directory/* -- March 2022)

13. Bill Peirson, co-owner of the former church at Colorado and Plymouth is a longtime resident of the area. The Peirson family moved from the *Colorado Place* apartments, on Odean (just west of the *Stevens Park Shopping Center*), to 2022 Mayflower Drive, in Stevens Park Estates, when Bill was quite young. (*Dallas City Directory: 1945, and 1955, Portal of Texas History, UNT*). He was born around 1945. Like his older sibling, Elizabeth, Bill probably went to Rosemont, W.E. Greiner, and he’s listed as Class of 1966 at Sunset high school. *The Dallas Morning News* reports Peirson “pledging” in Phi Kappa Sigma fraternity as a freshman at UT Austin – fall of 1966 --when Bill’s father, William Howard Peirson Sr., passed away. (*DMN: 1966- Oct-3rd and Sept. 24th*)

Chris Peirson was a classmate with Bill in the 1977 graduating class of the Law School at Texas Tech. (*peirsonlaw.com*) They have two adult sons, one now living in Kessler Park, and another in East Kessler. For many years Bill Peirson's family has resided at 1235 Lausanne, formerly the Lula Ward Dorsey home. (*whitepages.com*) They also own the house next door – 1241 Lausanne. (*DCAD*) Chris and Bill Peirson have a three-attorney practice, *PeirsonPatterson, LLP*, specializing in real estate law, which the firm’s webpage says is especially focused on providing service to banks and the residential mortgage industry. (*peirsonlaw.com*)

Next-door neighbor Mary Alice Ayers said that Bill’s mother, Esther Peirson, remained in the family home at 2022 Mayflower, taking care of Bill’s older wheelchair-bound sister, Elizabeth Marie Peirson, who suffered from multiple sclerosis and muscular dystrophy, until Elizabeth passed away in 2009. (*FindAGrave – Restland*) Esther then moved into a retirement home and lived another two years, mentally and physically active until she died in her sleep at age 101 or 102. The house on Mayflower remained unoccupied until it was sold in October, 2021. (*DCAD*) Mary Alice said that Esther watched church on television, and that she did not think any of the Peirsons were ever involved in Christian Science faith; but persistent neighborhood legend has it that Bill’s mother, Esther, had been active in church gatherings and/or had used its Reading Room – she being the reason her son and daughter-in-law had purchased the church building.

14. Longtime Stevens resident Jeff Herrington recalled (20th February 2022) that when he had been president of the Stevens Park Estates Neighborhood Association (SPENA) during the 2000s decade, that he would telephone Bill Peirson and Peirson would permit SPENA meetings to be held in the church. “He was very nice.” The only stipulation Peirson required was: “no food or drink” in the sanctuary – only in the secondary rooms at the back. Early Conservation District discussion meetings were held there.

Jeff remembered that during that Lauraette resident Scott Jenke had wanted to convert the former church building into “lofts” – a multifamily apartment remodel concept. The Peirsons wanted none of it.

15. The creation of Conservation District No. 20-- *Stevens Park Conservation District* -- was discussed in various community gatherings for several years before its first legislation, Ordinance No. 28407 (53 pages), was adopted on the 28th of September 2011. Further Amendments to those rules were passed by the Dallas City Council on the 22nd of August 2018, in Ordinance No. 30958 (31 pages).

The Peirsons willingly included their property in this new Stevens Park Conservation District. Almost nothing is stated in the rules specifically about the church property. It is included within “Subarea A”, where the former church site now has four possible “main uses”:

- Church,
- Handicapped group dwelling units (usage where a Special Use Permit might be required),
- Local utilities (usage where a Special Use Permit may be required), and
- Single family residence.

Before it was included in the Stevens Park Conservation District this unusual site had never been specifically “zoned”. Its zoning had been listed as “PARK”, along with adjacent lands of the Stevens Park Golf Course. (Church usage can be located in any “non-hazardous” type of zoning). The 2/3 acre church site has never “platted” with special restrictions, and other covenants were never imposed in prior deeds.

The rules of the Stevens Park Conservation District (CD #20) may be found at:

- a. 2011 – City of Dallas Ordinance No. 28407 (53 pages):
http://www.stevenspark.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/28407_StevensPark-ConsDist.pdf
- b. 2018 – City of Dallas Ordinance No. 30958 (31 pages):
https://dallascityhall.com/departments/sustainabledevelopment/planning/DCH%20Documents/conservation%20districts/stevens%20park/Z178_113_Final_Ord_08222018.pdf

16. In January of 2011, an individual poster using the name *DALLAZ* started a thread on an internet forum, *City-Data.com* which they titled: “**Oak Cliff's Most Endangered Buildings**”, with Second Church being listed as their #1 pick. Their reasoning was that the church property was not going to in the Stevens Park Conservation District – a fear that turned out to be unfounded.

Otherwise, Second Church has ever been included on any other “*Most Endangered*” list.

It has never been nominated for any landmark protection.

David Preziosi, Executive Director of *Preservation Dallas*, emailed: “I checked our files and unfortunately we don’t have one on the church.” (23rd February 2022).

17. Her fence across Plymouth Road from the church, Marydale neighbor Ellie Hajek remembered that during last year’s unprecedented “Valentine’s Blizzard” (13th -17th Feb. 2021), a water pipe burst inside the empty church building, flooding the basement well on the east side of the building. Water started running out the back of the church onto the parking lot. Neighbor Neil Smith tried to call the Peirsons, but finally Ged Dipprey and some other neighbors went over and shut the church’s water off (at the meter box). A few weeks later a crew started cleaning up inside.

Kenda North slipped inside the church just long enough to see that the plaster ceiling in the sanctuary had started falling. Containers full of books were stacked in the pews. Otherwise the condition of the interior of the church, since that flood, is unknown.

A tree at the eastern front of the building toppled, and neighbors complained about the condition of the roof. The Peirsons then re-roofed the entire building (2021). The grounds continue to be carefully and regularly maintained. Despite these efforts and expenses, the owners are falling behind in the ongoing battle to keep the building fully maintained. Windows and frames all around the building show damage and separation. Stone steps at the front are disintegrating. The worst deterioration is the cylindrical cupola (steeple) whose falling rotten wood trim boards became so threatening that a protective enclosure was mounted.

Peggy Victor Shipp (email: 24th February 2022): “I was talking to my friend who is a member and one of the founders of Kessler Community Church [located on the west side of Hampton Road, just north of Fort Worth Avenue]. She said her husband, who is a retired firefighter, used to take care of the yard at the church on Colorado and Plymouth. At the time there were only nine members left and all were over 85 years old. They were struggling to pay the bills and they proposed swapping buildings because they had a reading room and thought the other location would be easier to find for Christian Scientists that came to Dallas and wanted to go to a reading room. Much to her dismay the elders at her church refused the offer. She thinks it sold for about \$200k soon after that. Several years later they approached the new owners (Piersons?) but they would not talk to them. She remembers a church member saying the pipe organ in the sanctuary was custom built. She thinks in Germany, and sent to them. So they had to heat and cool the sanctuary even though they didn't use it, to preserve the organ. I can only imagine the condition it's in now, if it's still there. No hard facts but interesting information.”



February 2022: Conditions of deterioration

(photos by author)





February 2022: Conditions of deterioration
(photos by author)



18. The old sign at the entrance to the church parking lot said “WELCOME” so I proceeded to walk around the outside of the church on the 13th of February 2022, to check the utilities.

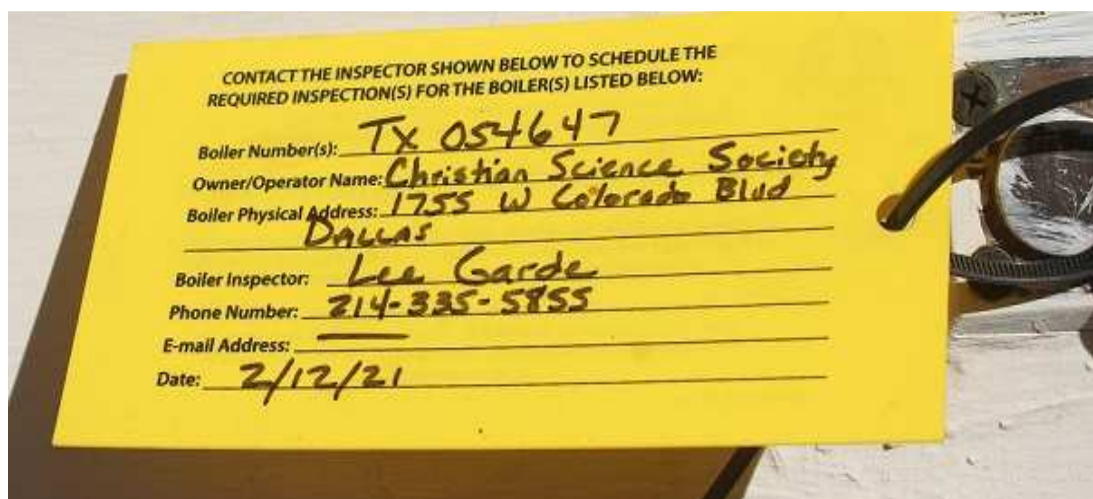
Natural Gas: there is a padlock keeping the gas meter valve OFF

Electricity: the electric meter has been REMOVED -- wires are capped with plastic tape.

Water: when turned wide-open, a hose bibb near the back door had no water pressure.

The mailbox appeared to be functional. There were no names or identification on it.

This yellow tag was hanging on one the Plymouth Road doors, near the mailbox.



(photos by author)



(photo by author)

19. Board members of the *Stevens Park Estates Neighborhood Association* thought that several years ago City Council Representative Scott Griggs, and then successor Chad West, had tried to contact the Peirsons to talk about their church property. Chad West emailed me (23rd Feb. 2022) saying, “ ... I remember engaging in discussions a long time ago regarding the church, but can’t recall the end result off hand.”; and Ashley Long, City Hall assistant to Mayor Pro Tem West, followed up (24th February 2022), “Our records do not indicate that MPT West has had any conversations with the owners. ...”

I tried to telephone the Second Church of Christ, Scientist and my call was answered by an answering machine identifying itself as the Christian Science Society. I left a message explaining that I was doing history research and wanted to talk with someone in the congregation. I also tried to look up phone numbers of Diane Blane (First Reader), Bill Dougherty (Director), and Amy Burns (Second Reader -- inactive) – calling each. I also called the Reading Room at Third Church on Oak Lawn Avenue. No one replied to any of these calls.

I emailed Bill and Chris Pierson at their law office on the 27th of January 2021, to ask if they would participate in a history interview about their church building. I followed up the next week with a phone call to verify that the email address I had used was being actively watched – I was assured it was. A month later, on the 28th of February, I again emailed Bill and Chris Pierson and also mailed a paper copy of my letter to their home. No response has been received.



(photo by author)

“Dallas Skyline (from the west) from Stevens Park Golf Course in Oak Cliff”-- by: “75316serk”-- 28 September 2019

*under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International license -- as enumerated at:
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Dallas_Skyline_\(from_the_west\)_from_Stevens_Park_Golf_Course_in_Oak_Cliff.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Dallas_Skyline_(from_the_west)_from_Stevens_Park_Golf_Course_in_Oak_Cliff.jpg)*



End