

Oregon Historic Site Form

Woodmere School
7900 Duke St
Portland, Multnomah County

LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME

address: <u>7900 SE Duke St</u> <input type="checkbox"/> apprx. addr	historic name: <u>Woodmere School</u>
<u>Portland</u> <input type="checkbox"/> vcnty <u>Multnomah County</u>	current/ other names: <u>Woodmere Elementary School</u>
Optional Information assoc addresses: (former addresses, intersections, etc.) location descr: (remote sites)	block nbr: <u>SEC</u> lot nbr: <u>R99</u> tax lot nbr: <u>R33628</u> township: _____ range: _____ section: _____ 1/4: _____ zip: _____

PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS

resource type: <u>Building</u> height (# stories): <u>1</u>	total # eligible resources: <u>1</u> total # ineligible resources: <u>2</u>
elig. evaluation: <u>eligible/significant</u>	NR status: _____ (indiv listed only; see Grouping for hist dist)
primary constr date: <u>1954</u> (c.) <input type="checkbox"/> secondary date: <u>1957</u> (c.) <input type="checkbox"/> (optional--use for major addns)	NR date listed: _____
primary orig use: <u>School</u>	orig use comments: _____
secondary orig use: _____	
primary style: <u>Northwest Regional</u>	prim style comments: _____
secondary style: _____	sec style comments: _____
primary siding: <u>Standard Brick</u>	siding comments: <u>Red brick</u>
secondary siding: _____	
plan type: <u>School (General)</u>	architect: <u>Caine, Morton</u>
	builder: _____
comments/notes:	

GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS

survey project name or other grouping name	<u>PPS Historic Building Assessment 2009</u>	<u>Survey & Inventory Project</u>
farmstead/cluster name:		external site #: <u>296</u> (ID# used in city/agency database)

SHPO INFO FOR THIS PROPERTY

NR date listed: _____
ILS survey date: 6/24/2009
RLS survey date: 6/24/2009
Gen File date: _____
106 Project(s)



ARCHITECTURAL / PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

(Include expanded description of the building/property, setting, significant landscape features, outbuildings, and alterations)

Summary Description

Woodmere School is located at 7900 SE Duke Street in the Brentwood Darlington neighborhood of southeast Portland. The 5.53-acre campus consists of an h-shaped building (296A) built in 1954 and two portable classrooms buildings (296P1, 2). The Northwest Regional style school incorporates an interior garden to provide maximum light and ventilation to the classrooms. The wood frame building is clad in red brick. Moderately sloped gable roofs cover the single story building. Fenestration consists of grouped metal frame windows.

Architectural Description

Woodmere School is located at 7900 SE Duke Street in the Brentwood Darlington neighborhood of southeast Portland. Development in the neighborhood consists primarily of single family residences built between 1950 and 2000. The 5.53-acre campus consists of an h-shaped building built in 1954 and two portable classrooms builds. Recreational facilities include asphalt play areas located on the south side of the building and grass playfields situated at the west end of the campus.

The Northwest Regional style school incorporates an interior garden to provide maximum light and ventilation to the classrooms. The wood frame building, clad in red brick, rests on a poured concrete foundation. Fenestration consists of grouped metal frame windows. Moderately pitched gable roofs cover the single story building. The use of overhanging eaves to shade the classrooms is illustrative of the Northwest Regional style. A distinctive element of the school is the covered play area on the east elevation. The broad roof overhang, supported by exposed glulamated beams, is expressive of the desire to utilize structure and form to create functional yet architecturally distinctive spaces. The use of modern materials including stainless steel, plywood panels, steel columns, and glulamated beams throughout the building is also characteristic of the post-war schools.

The primary entry to the building is at the center of the courtyard. The primary public areas of the building including the administrative office, library, and auditorium, which are located immediately adjacent to the entry. A U-shaped double loaded corridor provides access to the classrooms. The walls of the corridors are covered in exposed brick, a composite wainscot, and plaster. Tubular fluorescent lighting fixtures are suspended from the ceilings. Flooring consists of a mixture of 6"x6" and 12"x12" tile, carpet, and hardwood.

Public spaces in the building consist of the cafeteria and gymnasium. The slightly pitched ceiling of the cafeteria is supported by glulamated beams. The cafeteria retains its folding dining tables and benches. The gymnasium is located at the west side of the school. Glulamated beams support the flat roof. Concrete panels provide a durable and decorative play surface.

The classrooms are primarily square or rectangular with built-in cabinetry on the walls opposite and adjacent to the windows. The classroom windows feature an operable awning window beneath a group of fixed-frame windows.

Alterations/Integrity

Since the construction of Woodmere School in 1954 there have been only minimal alterations to the building and campus. The east L-shaped portion of the school was added in 1957. At this time the gymnasium was constructed at the south end of the west "finger". These additions utilized similar materials to the original construction and are seamlessly connected to the original corridor plan. The most significant alteration to the interior occurred when the Media Center was remodeled in 1987. During the remodel, original built-ins and many other materials were retained (Portland Facility Profile). Woodmere School retains its integrity with its original plan, materials, and massing intact. The interior and exterior finishes are original. The major community spaces and corridor configuration are unaltered.

HISTORY

(Chronological, descriptive history of the property from its construction through at least the historic period [preferably to the present])

Statement of Significance

Built in 1954, Woodmere School was constructed during a period of modernization and new construction initiated by Portland Public Schools (PPS) after World War II. In 1945, the citizens of Portland approved a ballot measure that provided \$5,000,000 over five years to construct, improve, and rehabilitate its public school buildings (Portland Public Schools 1945: 2). The ballot measure enabled PPS to respond to the explosive growth in school-age children that had occurred in the city as a result of the arrival of defense plant workers and their families, as well as the deferred maintenance arising from the lack of funds during the depression (Portland Public Schools 1945: 2-3). Beginning with this initial bond measure, PPS embarked on an effort to improve its school facilities through renovations, additions, and the new construction of over fifty schools between 1945 and 1970.

For the new building program, PPS schools adopted the call of architects and school planners across the country for new types of schools. Nationally known architects including Richard Neutra, the Walter Gropius led Architects Collective, and the Perkins Will architectural firm promoted new school types that reflected both evolving educational practices and design philosophies (Ogata 2008: 567-568; Perkins and Cocking 1949: 238-246). Emphasizing the need for economy and rapid construction, the designers adopted new materials that were standardized and mass produced including steel, plywood, and aluminum. In many buildings, architects achieved flexibility through the building's structure by employing non load-bearing partition walls and zoned ventilation and heating systems. Folding walls and moveable cabinets provided additional flexibility intended to enable teachers to rearrange rooms based on lesson plan and activities (Ogata 2008: 568).

Although many of the architects for schools in Portland continued to design their schools to be extensible, designers turned away from the two-story

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schools with centralized massing popularized by Naramore and Jones. Instead many architects adopted the principles of the Modern movement and its regional variant, the Northwest style, choosing to express functional areas through massing and materials to create innovative forms (McMath 1974: 628). Classrooms featured extensive built-ins that included sinks, slots for bulky rolls of paper, and coat storage. Many buildings featured interior courtyards that facilitated access to the outdoors and expanded the opportunities for passive ventilation and daylighting, a hallmark of the Northwest Style.

In 1911 Portland Public Schools acquired property at 7900 SE Duke Street. The new site included an existing 4 room building known as Weston School. In 1913 the name of the school was changed to Woodmere Primary School in honor of the subdivision of southeast Portland in which the school was located (Portland Chronology Binder; Snyder 1979: 242). In 1949, the district acquired land at 6540 SE 78th Street. A new building was erected for \$222,223.95 in 1954. The existing school buildings were demolished in 1955 (Portland Chronology Binder). The east, L-shaped portion of the school and the gymnasium were added in 1957.

For the design of Woodmere School, the architect Morton Caine adopted the building program and principles that dominated the discourse for school design during the second half of the twentieth century. A native of New York, Morton Caine obtained his Masters in Architecture from the Carnegie Institute of Technology in 1933. Caine practiced with several architects in the Rochester area before coming to Portland in 1936. Caine's initial employment was as the architecture representative for the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company. After World War II, he entered into partnership with Luther Lee Dougan and Bernard A. Heims. The partnership of Dougan, Heims & Caine was responsible for the design of the State of Oregon Office Building in Portland. After the firm dissolved in 1951, Caine entered into private practice. Notable projects designed by Caine included the Lake Oswego High School, the Industrial Branch of the First National Bank, and the Lovejoy Medical Clinic (Ritz 2002: 63-64). In addition to Woodmere Elementary School, Caine was the architect of the Annex to Arleta School.

The Woodmere School is a good example of the finger plan type school in the Northwest Regional style that exhibits a high degree of integrity with its floor plan, cladding, and many intact interior finishes. The school was built in response to the residential development in southeast Portland during the PPS program of post-war construction and is eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A. Although designed by Morton Caine, a successful architect in Portland, archival research does not indicate that the school was a major commission. However, the building is a good example of the use of finger plan schools to facilitate rapid construction and expansion. The building's distinctive covered play area, central courtyard, broad roof overhangs, expressed structural system, and use of materials to provide functional decoration are all characteristic of the Northwest Regional style, and therefore the building is eligible for the NRHP under Criterion C.

RESEARCH INFORMATION

(Check all of the basic sources consulted and cite specific important sources)

- | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Title Records | <input type="checkbox"/> Census Records | <input type="checkbox"/> Property Tax Records | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local Histories |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sanborn Maps | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biographical Sources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SHPO Files | <input type="checkbox"/> Interviews |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Obituaries | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Newspapers | <input type="checkbox"/> State Archives | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Historic Photographs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> City Directories | <input type="checkbox"/> Building Permits | <input type="checkbox"/> State Library | |

Local Library: Multnomah County Library

University Library: Portland State University Library

Historical Society: Oregon Historical Society

Other Repository: PPS Archives

Bibliography: Bibliography

McMath, George. "A Regional Style Comes to the City." In *Space, Style and Structure: Buildings in Northwest America*. Ed. Thomas Vaughan, 467-499. Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 1974.

_____. "The Wood Tradition Expands" 528-647.

Ogata, Amy F. "Building for Learning in Postwar American Elementary Schools." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 67, no. 4, December 2008: 562-591.

Oregonian: Arson Delays School Opening (09-05-1982).

Perkins, Lawrence B and Walter D. Cocking. *Schools*. New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1949.

Portland Public Schools Chronology Binder.

Portland Public Schools. *Repairing, Rehabilitating and Modernizing the School Plant*. Portland: Portland Public Schools. Office of the Superintendent, 1945.

_____. Woodmere Elementary School. Facility Plan.

_____. Woodmere Elementary School. Facility Profile.

Ritz, Richard. E. *Architects of Oregon. A Biographical Dictionary of Architects Deceased – 19th and 20th Centuries*. Portland: Lair Hill Publishing, 2003.

Sanborn Map Company

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1924-1928, 1908-Dec. 1950 Sanborn Maps, Multnomah County Public Library, Portland, Oregon. Available at:
<https://catalog.multcolib.org/validate?url=http%3A%2F%2Fsanborn.umi.com.catalog.multcolib.org%3A80%2F>. Accessed June 16, 2009.

Snyder, Eugene E. Portland Names and Neighborhoods. Their Historic Origins. Portland: Binforrd & Mort Publishing; 1st edition 1979.



East elevation facing west



South elevation and covered play area



Entry courtyard with south and west elevations



North elevation facing southeast



West elevation

**Woodmere School
Exterior Photos
ENTRIX 2009**



Entry lobby and corridor facing south



Gymnasium facing west



Classroom built-ins, beams and ceiling



Auditorium facing south

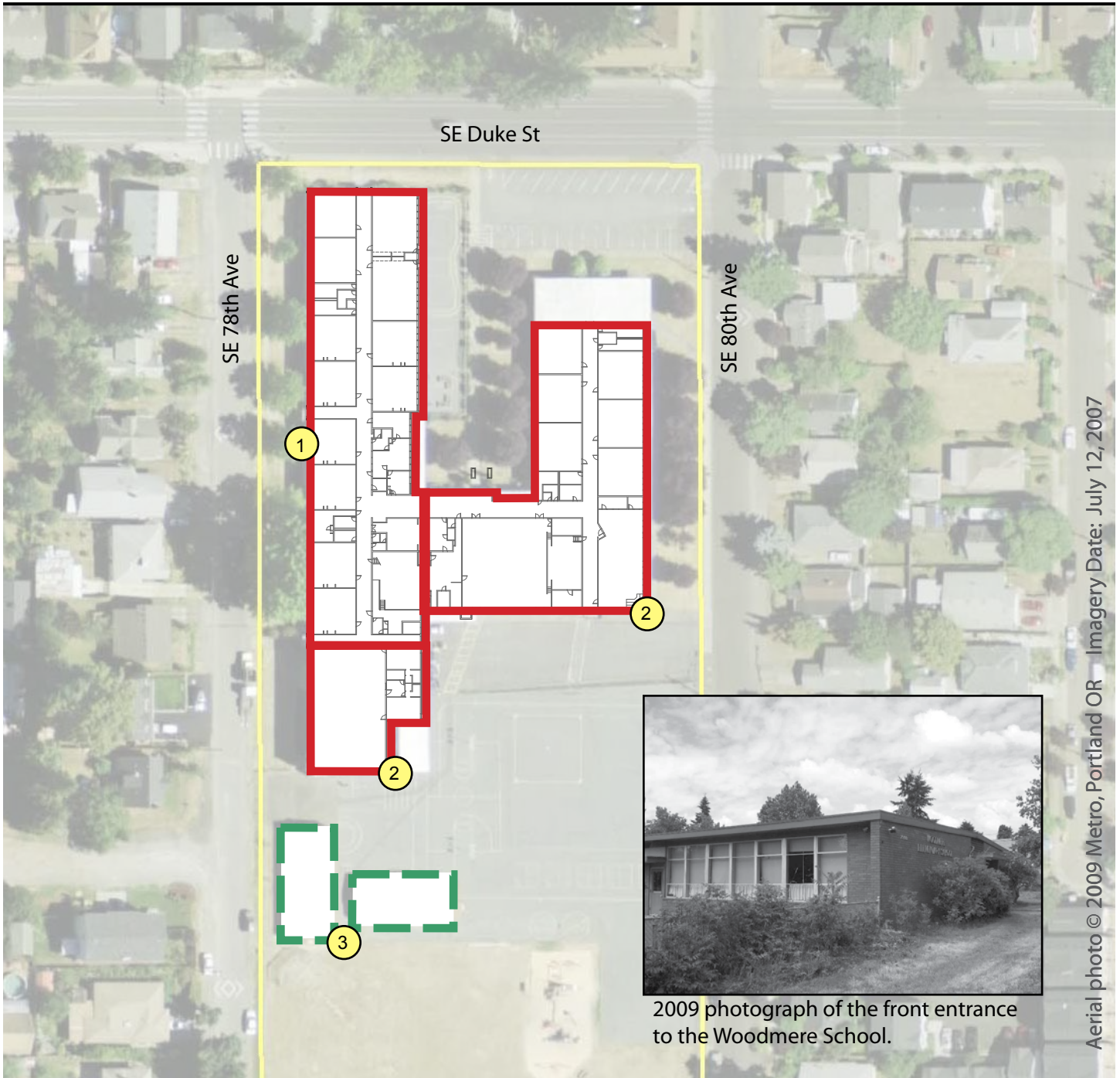


Media Center

Woodmere School

6540 SE 78th Ave, Portland OR, 97206

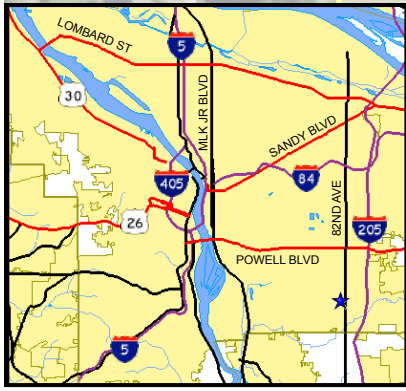
[View Site in Google Maps](#)






Aerial photo © 2009 Metro, Portland OR Imagery Date: July 12, 2007

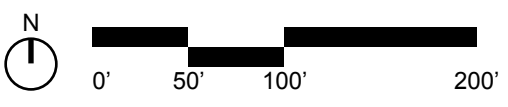


2009 photograph of the front entrance to the Woodmere School.



Historical Significance and Building Integrity

-  Contrib: High Significance
-  Contrib: Moderate Signif.
-  Non-Contributing



Building Periods

1. Original Building (296A), 1954
2. Addition (296A), 1957
3. Portables (296P), 1957



WOODMERE ELEMENTARY - 296

6540 SE 78TH AVE 97206

PPS HISTORIC ASSESSMENT



DRAWING: ANNOTATED PLAN

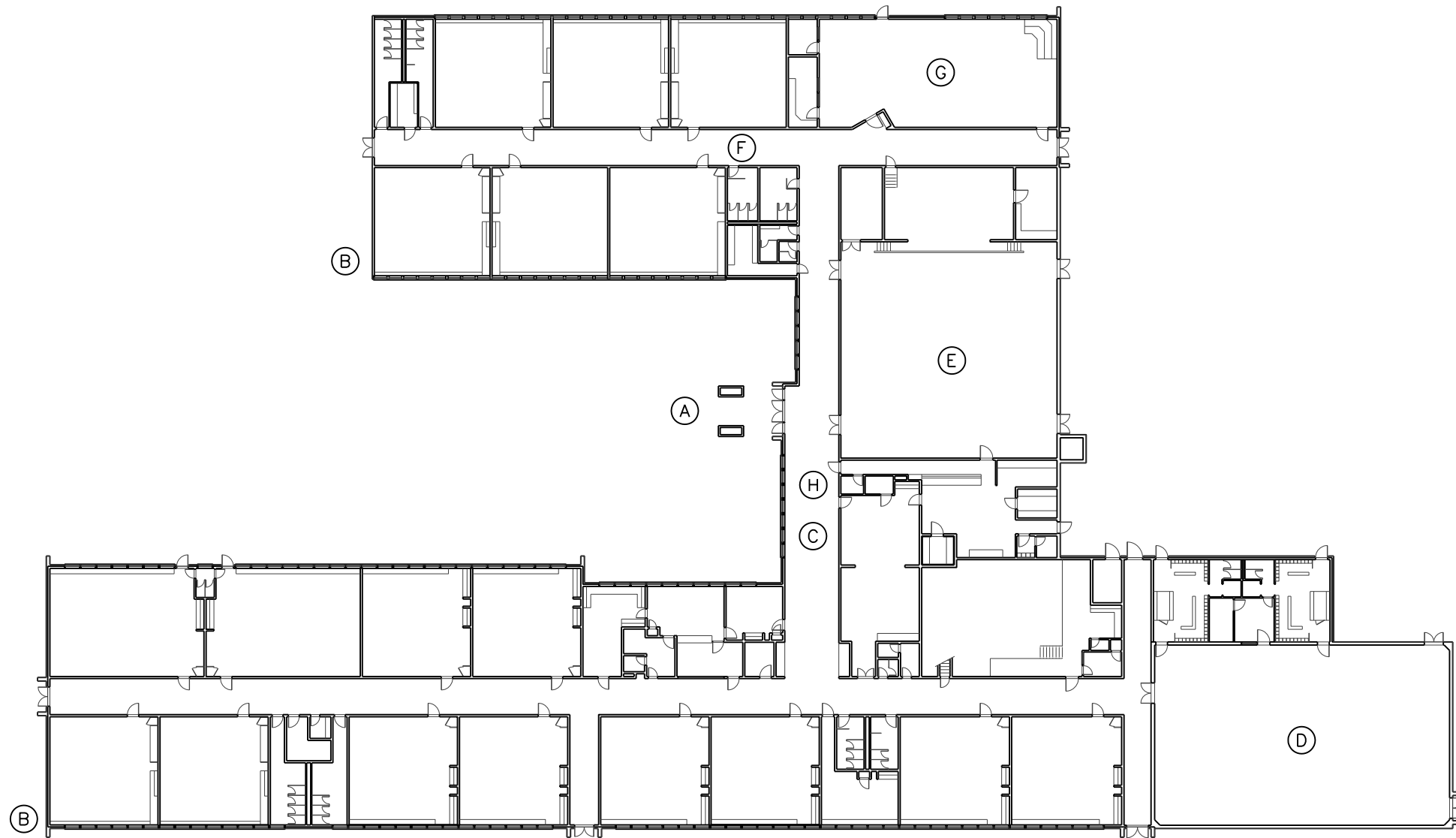
DATE: Sept. 4, 2009

KEYNOTES:

- (A) THE ENTRY TO THE SCHOOL IS LOCATED AT THE END OF A PAVED WALKWAY THAT LEADS FROM DUKE STREET.
- (B) THE TWO PARALLEL WINGS OR "FINGERS" CREATE AN INTERIOR COURTYARD THAT PROVIDES ADDITIONAL LIGHT AND VENTILATION FOR THE CLASSROOMS.
- (C) AN H-SHAPED DOUBLE LOADED CORRIDOR SERVES AS A CIRCULATION SPINE.
- (D) THE DOUBLE HEIGHT SPACE OF THE GYMNASIUM IS SUPPORTED BY GLULAMINATED BEAMS. CONCRETE PANELS PROVIDE A DURABLE PLAY SURFACE. GYMNASIUM ADDED TO SCHOOL IN 1957.
- (E) THE DOUBLE HEIGHT SPACE OF THE CAFETERIA IS SUPPORTED BY GLULAMINATED BEAMS. THE TABLES AND BENCHES RECESS INTO SPACES IN THE WALL.
- (F) THIS WING WAS ADDED IN 1957.
- (G) THE MEDIA CENTER WAS REMODELED IN 1987.
- (H) BENCHES IN THE ENTRY LOBBY PROVIDE A VIEW TO THE COURTYARD.

GENERAL KEYNOTES:

- (1) THE CLASSROOMS ARE RECTANGULAR WITH GROUPED METAL FRAME WINDOWS ON THE EXTERNAL WALL. THE INTERIOR WALLS ARE LINED WITH BLONDE WOOD BUILT-INS. THE BEAMS THAT SUPPORT THE GABLE ROOF ARE VISIBLE IN THE CLASSROOMS.
- (2) FENESTRATION CONSISTS OF GROUPED METAL FRAME WINDOWS.
- (3) THE SCHOOL EXHIBITS CHARACTERISTIC ELEMENTS OF THE NORTHWEST REGIONAL STYLE INCLUDING THE GABLE ROOF FORMS, PROJECTING EAVES, VARIETY OF CLADDING MATERIALS, AND USE OF A COURTYARD TO ENHANCE PASSIVE VENTILATION AND DAYLIGHTING.
- (4) A COVERED PLAY/ WAITING AREA IS LOCATED ADJACENT TO THE PARKING LOT.



1 WOODMERE ELEMENTARY - 1ST FLOOR
SCALE: 1" = 40'-0"

