

Oregon Historic Site Form

Washington High School
531 14th Ave
Portland, Multnomah County

LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME

address: 531 SE 14th Ave apprx. addr

historical name: Washington High School

current/ other names: Child Service Center Facility

Portland vcnty Multnomah County

Optional Information
 assoc addresses: _____
 (former addresses, intersections, etc.)
 location descr: _____
 (remote sites)

block nbr: _____ lot nbr: _____ tax lot nbr: _____
 township: 1 S range: 1E section: 2 1/4: _____
 zip: _____

PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS

resource type: Building height (# stories): 4 total # eligible resources: 0 total # ineligible resources: 2

elig. evaluation: not eligible/non-contributing NR status: _____

primary constr date: 1924 (c.) secondary date: 1957 (c.) NR date listed: _____ (indiv listed only; see Grouping for hist dist)
 (optional--use for major addns)

primary orig use: School orig use comments: _____

secondary orig use: Administrative Facility

primary style: Beaux Arts prim style comments: _____

secondary style: Classical Revival: other sec style comments: _____

primary siding: Brick:Other/Undefined siding comments: _____

secondary siding: Poured Concrete

plan type: School (General) architect: Houghtaling & Dougan

builder: Parker and Banfield

comments/notes: The main classroom building (370A) and auto shop (370E) are not contributing resources/not eligible.

GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS

survey project name or other grouping name: PPS Historic Building Assessment 2009 Survey & Inventory Project

farmstead/cluster name: _____ external site #: 370
 (ID# used in city/agency database)

SHPO INFO FOR THIS PROPERTY

NR date listed: _____

ILS survey date: 6/9/2009

RLS survey date: 6/9/2009

Gen File date: _____

106 Project(s)



ARCHITECTURAL / PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

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

Description Summary

Washington High School is a four story, brick and concrete high school building designed in the Classical Revival style. The main school building consists of a square shaped volume constructed of five-to-one common bond brick. The building features a flat roof with the central atrium that has a sunken gable roof covered with opaque raised seam metal. Constructed 1923-1925, the school (370A) exhibits an extensive use of decorative terra cotta, particularly on the west elevation, to express its Classical detailing. The classical elements, in addition to the building's bilaterally symmetrical fenestration serve to reinforce the classical ideals of order and balance.

Washington High School is currently vacant and has been altered since its construction to accommodate the evolving educational needs of Portland Public Schools. The most significant alterations include the installation of acoustic tiles on all ceilings, replacement of classroom doors, and the remodeling of the fourth floor to accommodate additional classroom space through the construction of an additional floor. Several additions were made to the school, but while many of these have subsequently been removed, there are visible scars on the building. The school retains much of its original fenestration, although many windows have been boarded over to prevent vandalism. Metal cages have also been installed on all first floor windows that have not been boarded over, and nearly the entire collection of south elevation windows were replaced.

Architectural Description

Washington High School is located in the Buckman neighborhood of southeast Portland Oregon at 531 SE 14th Street. The neighborhood consists of a mixture of single family residences, multi-story apartments, and multi-story commercial buildings built 1880-1920 (Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps 1901-1950). A small courtyard, approached via a tree lined staircase and walkway, exhibits a flagpole and circular concrete bench and is located in front of the principal (west) elevation. Approached from the west, the school is located on a site consisting of four combined city lots. The school building (370A) occupies one entire city block with playing fields situated on two additional blocks to the south. The comparably small boiler building that occupies the fourth block is not owned by Portland Public Schools but is historically related to the school. Portland Public Schools also owns the one story masonry former auto shop building across SE Alder Street (370E). Presently vacated, the building exhibits a shed roof supported by a series of exposed glulam beams.

The main school building consists of a square shaped volume constructed of five-to-one common bond brick. The building features a flat roof with the central atrium exhibiting a sunken gable roof covered with opaque raised seam metal. Classical detailing visually divides the building horizontally and vertically thereby reducing the size and massing. The brick walls, for instance, are interrupted by a series of projecting horizontal elements that include a plain concrete watertable, horizontal bands of soldier-laid brick, terra cotta coping and moldings, as well as a substantial entablature.

The most important expression of the building's Classicism, however, lies on the west side of the building. To emphasize the importance of the primary (west) elevation, a projecting bay features three portals that are framed by egg-and-dart terra cotta moldings and topped with molded hoods and exhibit reveals inscribed with inspirational quotations. Above the quotations, Greek fret-framed panels with bas relief classical figures lend additional decorative attention to the entranceway. Immediately above these portals lie four fluted Ionic columns that support a terra cotta entablature. The frieze of the entablature, inscribed with the words "Washington High School", is flanked at either end by bas relief panels of classically garbed figures. Immediately above the frieze is a terra cotta cornice consisting of egg and dart moldings that then terminate into a cymatium exhibiting a cyma recta molding. The cornice is punctuated by gargoyle heads that appear more like lions heads. Terra cotta coping completes the composition by covering the tops of the walls.

Although the walls flanking the main entranceway, exhibit less ornamental detail, the first and second floor windows are framed by brick engaged columns. On the first floor, these columns feature plain bases with relatively modest capitals, while the second floor exhibits plain bases with classical busts as the capital. The columns that extend from the third floor to the fourth floor feature plain bases with stylized Corinthian order capitals. A dentil-laden stringcourse then lies above these windows and is followed by a terra cotta cornice. On the north and south extremities of the elevation and located near the fourth floor level are Greek-fret laced bas relief panels depicting chariots and classical figures.

Other significant character defining features include two, one story, brick entryways located on the building's east side. Each of the entryways feature fluted Doric columns that support a plain frieze and cornice decorated with egg-and-dart cyma recta cymatium. Rising above the cornice is a central terra cotta panel flanked on either side by unfurled scrolls. The panels feature inspirational inscriptions; one by Cicero and one by Herbert Spencer.

The nearly square massing of the building encapsulates an interior plan consisting of a square, donut-shaped corridor ringed on the outside by classrooms and school offices and inside by a cafeteria on the first floor and a central auditorium that extends through the next three floors. Minimal original wood trim is evident through most of corridors and interiors of the classrooms. A majority of the classroom and office doors appear to have been replaced with more modern wood doors, but several classrooms retain their original built-in cabinets. Nearly all ceilings are covered with acoustic tiles that were installed in 1956 and each of the classrooms exhibit tubular fluorescent light fixtures. Most of the main staircases and handrails appear largely intact although additional safety railings have been installed.

Alterations and Modifications

Perhaps the most altered exterior elevation of the building is the south elevation where nearly all of the original twelve-over-one single hung sash windows were replaced in 1989 with double-glazed windows (PPS Archives). Several other first floor window openings were also bricked up and/or replaced by new doorways. On the west elevation, highly visible scars on the second and third floor exterior walls near the southwest corner indicate the former location of corridors that attached the main building (370A) to a 1960 classroom and office addition (370D). The addition was

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demolished in 2006. On the interior, several of the rooms have been modified over time to accommodate new uses or to enlarge spaces for offices (1946, 1957), home economics and shops on the first floor (1956-1957), an expanded library (1980), and to integrate additional spaces on the fourth floor (1990s). Once part of a larger campus of buildings, only the 1970 Auto Shop (370E) and the 1912 Boiler Building (non-PPS owned property) survive. All other buildings have been removed.

HISTORY

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

Significance Statement

Amidst the growing influence of John Dewey's Progressive Education Movement, Portland's public schools began a dramatic re-building program. The program served as a response to changing city demographics and ideas concerning school safety, sanitation, and child centered instructional methods beginning in the first decade of the 1900s (Rippa, 1997: passim; Cremin 1961: 135-153; Cubberley 1915: 283-290). By 1905, it became increasingly clear that dramatic increases in school-age children outstripped the district's existing classroom capacity. Additionally, much of the new residential development was occurring in areas of the city where the existing schools could not effectively serve the growing number of families with children (Cubberley 1915: 283-285, 288-290).

Simultaneous to this growth, several well-publicized school fires elsewhere in the United States brought calls for a more fundamental change in the building stock of the district. In 1906 Portland Mayor Lane called for the construction of new "fireproof" school buildings (Oregonian, 10-31-1906). In 1910, various city neighborhood "advancement clubs" joined forces to discuss the unfit school buildings in their respective neighborhoods (Oregonian 07-31-1910). Soon after this meeting, on August 16, 1910, the Portland City Council enacted a requirement that all schools constructed after January 1, 1911 would have to be of fire proof construction (Powers and Corning 1937: 183). By 1914, in the first joint meeting between Portland city officials, Multnomah County Commissioners, and the school board, officials agreed to work with building code officials to encourage the use of fireproof construction and to implement fire safety measures in all existing and future schools (Oregonian, 03-31-1914).

In 1908, Portland Public Schools created the Bureau of Properties in an effort to centralize the management of the district's various properties (Powers and Corning 1937: 182). Within this office, the District architect took on a more formalized role in the design and maintenance of school facilities. These new school buildings were often constructed of brick and concrete and were one, two, three stories, or even four stories in height. To speed the construction of the new schools and to anticipate later growth in the neighborhood, these new buildings were often constructed in units (sometimes referred to as extensible schools) (Powers and Corning 1937: 182). The buildings also contained more differentiated and increasingly specialized instructional spaces such as libraries, gymnasiums, science rooms, music rooms, as well as assembly spaces (Powers and Corning 1937: 182). The architectural details of the new schools were largely encompassed by the Classical Revival, Colonial Revival, and Collegiate Gothic styles; architectural revivals that were viewed as inspirational and appropriate for educational settings (Betelle 1919: 28; Sibley 1923: 66; Patton 1967: 1-8).

Designed by the architectural firm of Houghtaling and Dougan, the current high school was constructed 1923-1925 after a fire in 1922 destroyed much of the 1906 Washington High School (Portland HRI form 1984; PPS School Chronology Binder). The firm of Houghtaling & Dougan was formed in 1915 by Luther Lee Dougan and Chester A. Houghtaling. A native of Indiana, Luther Lee Dougan moved to Portland and worked for the firms of A.E. Doyle and Aaron Gould before joining with Houghtaling to create their own firm (Ritz 2003: 109). A native of Cleveland, Ohio, Houghtaling moved to Portland in 1913 and immediately made an impact as the design engineer for the Ross Island and Burnside Bridges. Over the 10 years that Houghtaling & Dougan worked together they designed several notable buildings in the city of Portland, including the Elks Club (NR-listed) and the Medical Arts Building. After the partnership was dissolved in 1925, both architects continued without partners until the end of their careers (Ritz 2003: 193-194).

In 1923, the construction firm of Parker and Banfield was retained to construct the school for \$502,092 while the Kendall Heating company was awarded the contract for heating and ventilating; W.S. Fleming for the plumbing; NePage and McKenny for the electrical work (Oregonian 7-15-1923). The opening ceremony for the school was held on April 24, 1925 (Oregonian, 7-25-1925).

While the architectural details of the first Washington High School reflected Romanesque design influences, the new building presented a starkly different Classical Revival appearance – a design that was more in tune with several other Portland high schools built during the 1910s and 1920s including Grant High School (1923) and Benson High School (1916). Of these schools, Washington High School retains one of the most extensive compositions of Classical Revival detailing. Using a nearly identical donut-shaped floorplan as seen in the first Washington High School and the old Lincoln High School (1912, presently Lincoln Hall PSU), the new high school was constructed amidst an established campus of buildings that included the original Hawthorne School (constructed in stages between 1897-1900), Manual Training Building (1908 (demolished)), Gymnasium (1911, demolished) and a Boiler Building (1912, extant – non PPS owned property).

In the 1950s, the high school-age population of Portland once again increased thus necessitating an expansion and improvement program for Washington High School and its campus. This expansion included the demolition of the 1911 gymnasium and Hawthorne School and construction of a new gymnasium in 1958 and classroom/office/cafeteria addition in 1961. In 1970 the Washington H.S. Vocational Education Center (1970, extant) was also constructed.

In 1981, Washington High School was closed. The facility was reopened in 1983 as the Children's Service Center (CSC). This multi-purpose facility served multiple tenants that included "a day care center, a vocational program for Indian youth and the district's Continuing Education Center for Girls, a high school program primarily for pregnant young women who might otherwise become dropouts." The building also housed "offices for the district's driver education program, English-as-a-second language services, a special education testing center, Volunteers in Portland Schools (VPS), and the state Parent-Teacher Association" (Oregonian, 6-7-1981; Oregonian, 10-27-1983). In 2005, the building served as a shelter for Hurricane Katrina victims.

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Although associated with a noteworthy architectural firm and several events related to the growth of the Portland school district, and a good example of the Classical Revival style, Washington High School does not retain a level of historical integrity commensurate with other Portland High Schools constructed of similar styles during the same period and is therefore not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. While the Classical Revival style is clearly discernable on the building, several alterations have diminished the building's integrity of materials, design, and feeling. These alterations include the high visibility of the scar that remains from the removal of the classroom/cafe addition on the west elevation, removal of windows on the south elevation, door replacements, and extensive interior modifications that have blurred the original donut-shaped plan. The building also stands largely isolated on the property. Due to the loss of integrity, Washington High School is not eligible under NRHP Criteria A, B, or 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: Betelle, James O. "Architectural Styles as Applied to School Buildings." *American School Board Journal*. Vol. 58 (April 1919).

Cremin, Lawrence. *The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957*. New York: A. Knopf, 1961.

Cubberley, Ellwood Patterson. *The Portland Survey: A Textbook on City School Administration Based on a Concrete Study*. Yonkers-on-Hudson, NY: World Book Co., 1915.

Oregonian. "Change Favored in School Buildings." 3-31-1914.

Oregonian. "Closure Casts Pall Over Washington/Monroe Commencement Rite" 6-7-1981.

Oregonian. "Mayor Lane and the Schools." 10-31-1906.

Oregonian. "New Washington High School Open." 4-25-1925.

Oregonian. "School Auditorium Picked for New Role." 10-27-1983.

Oregonian. "School Award Opposed." 12-5-1922.

Oregonian. "School Buildings are Called Unfit." 7-31-1910.

Oregonian. "Washington High Contract is Let." 7-15-1923.

Patton, Glenn. "American Collegiate Gothic: A Phase of University Architectural Development." *Journal of Higher Education*. Vol. 38, No. 1 (January, 1967).

Portland Public Schools. *Schools Chronology Binder*.

Powers, Alfred and Howard McKinley Corning, *History of Education in Portland*. [Portland]: Work Projects Administration, 1937.

Rippa, Alexander. *Education in a Free Society: An American History*. New York: Longman, 1997.

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

Sanborn Map Company

1924-1928, 1908-Dec. 1950 Sanborn Maps, Multnomah County Public Library, Portland, Oregon. Available at: <https://catalog.multcolib.org/validate?url=http%3A%2F%2F0-sanborn.umi.com.catalog.multcolib.org%3A80%2F>. Accessed June 16, 2009.

Sibley, Ernest. "Why I Prefer the Colonial Style." *School Board Journal*: Vol. 66 (January 1923).



Main building (370A), looking northeast at principal elevation.



Main building (370A), looking southwest.



Main building (370A), detail of front portal entrances, looking northeast.



Main building (370A) rear (east) entry into building, looking west.



Main building (370A), detail of columns, looking east.

**Washington High Facility
Exterior Photos
ENTRIX, 2009**



Main Building (370A), detail of main office entrance.



Main Building (370A), detail of staircase.



Main Building (370A), 3rd floor corridor.



Main Building (370A), modern insertion of interior stair and room divisions on 4th floor.



Main Building (370A), representative built-in cabinets in classroom.

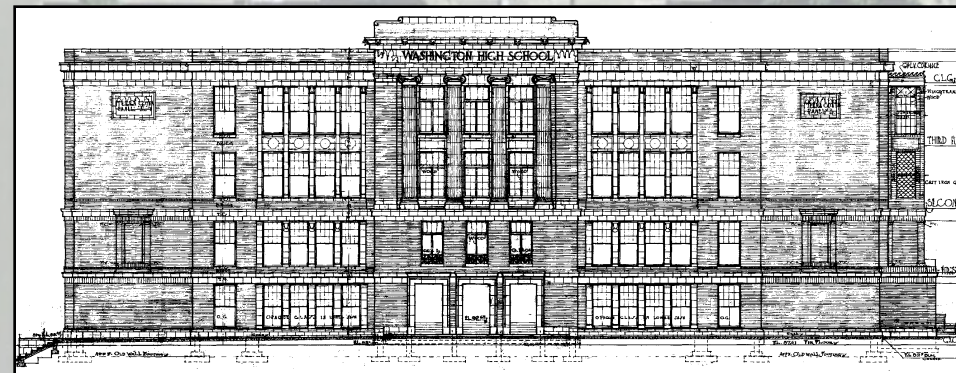
Washington High Facility

531 SE 14th Ave, Portland OR, 97214

[View Site in Google Maps](#)

Building Periods

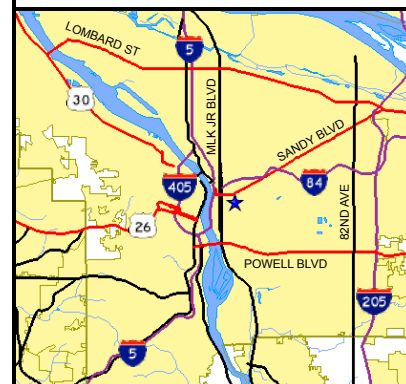
1. Main Building (370A), 1923
2. Auto Shop (370E), 1970
3. Boiler Building (370B), 1912 / 1950s addition (no longer owned by PPS)
4. Gymnasium (370C), 1958 (demolished 2006)
5. "C" Wing (370D), 1960 (demolished 2006)
6. Location of old gym, 1912-1960 and portables (removed 2006)
7. Hawthorne School, 1897 (demolished 1957)






West Elevation from 1923 architectural plans

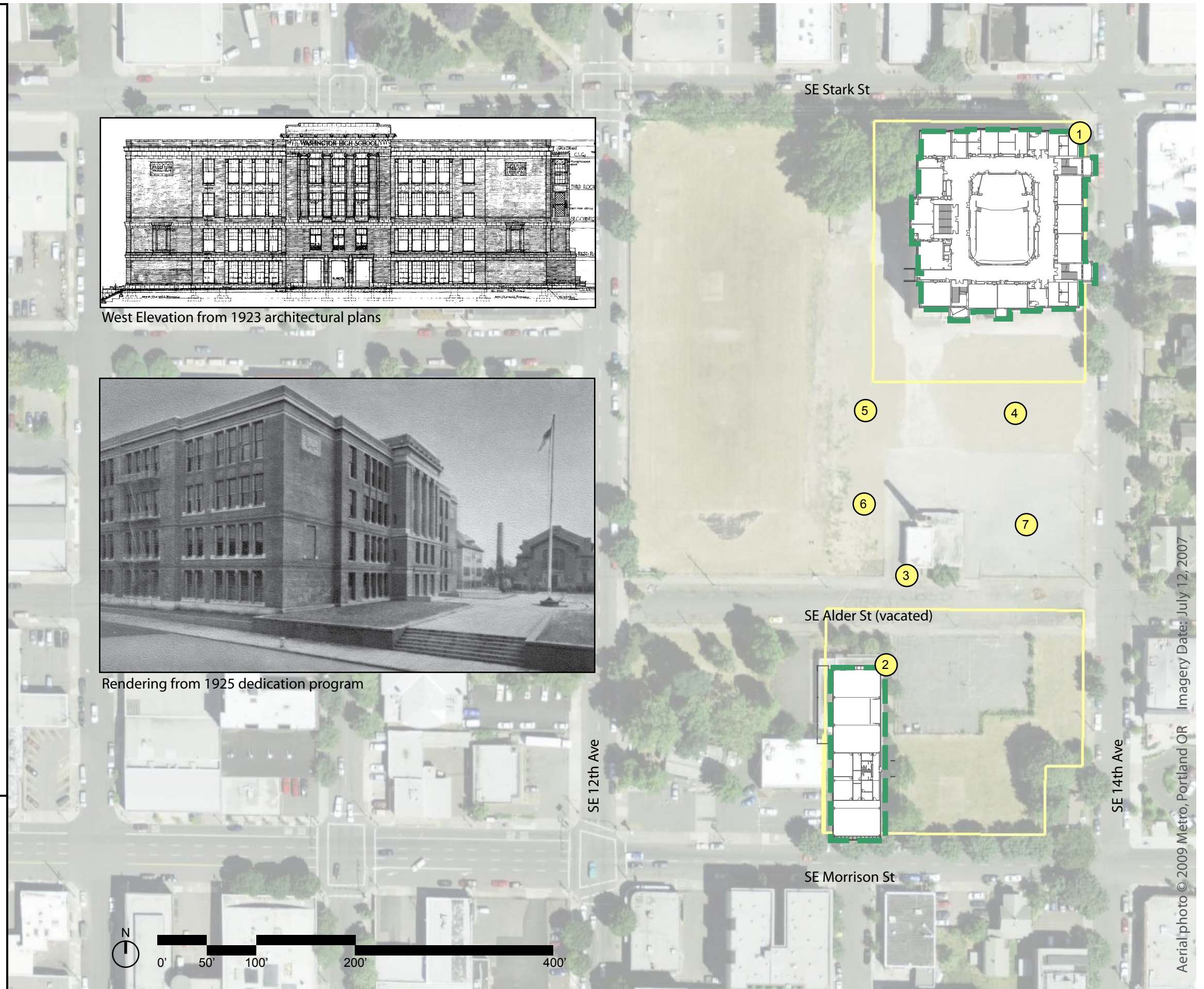


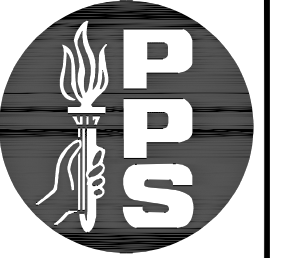
Rendering from 1925 dedication program



Historical Significance and Building Integrity

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





WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL / CSC

531 SE 14TH 97214

PPS HISTORIC ASSESSMENT



DRAWING: ANNOTATED PLAN

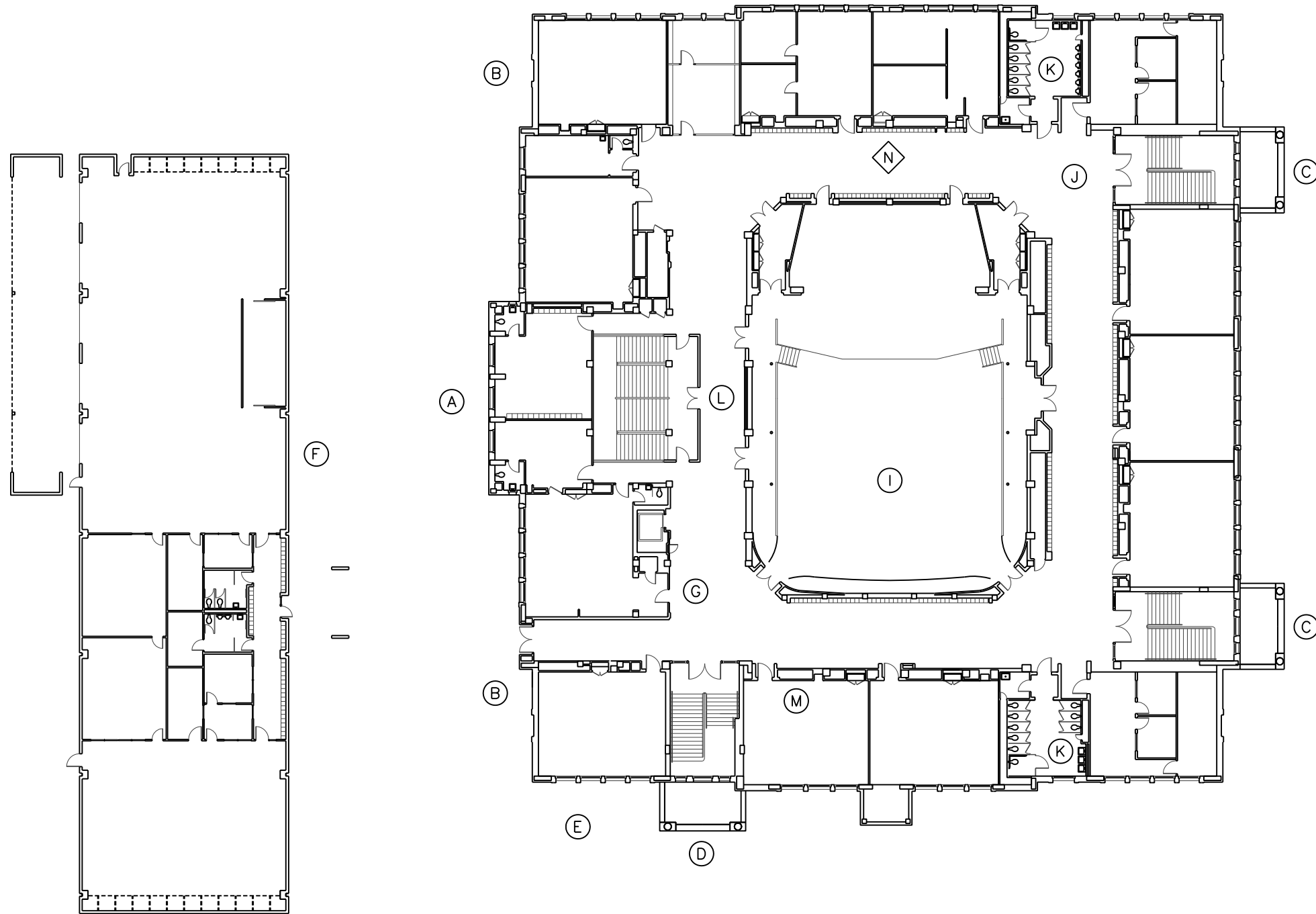
DATE: Sept. 4, 2009

KEYNOTES:

- (A) PRINCIPAL ENTRANCE: EXTENSIVE USE OF DECORATIVE TERRA COTTA FORMED IN CLASSICAL REVIVAL DETAILING THAT INCLUDES:
 - THREE ENTRY PORTALS WITH REVEALS INSCRIBED WITH INSPIRATIONAL QUOTES.
 - FOUR ENGAGES AND FLUTED IONIC COLUMNS SURMOUNTED BY A FULL ENTABLATURE
 - A FULL ENTABLATURE TOPPED WITH A CORNICE INTERRUPTED BY PROTRUDING LIONS HEADS.
- (B) BAS RELIEF PANELS DEPICTING HORSES, A CHARIOT AND RIDERS FRAMED BY FRETWORK
- (C) EACH REAR ENTRANCE FLANKED BY A PAIR OF FLUTED DORIC COLUMNS AND TOPPED BY A FALSE TERRA COTTA PARAPET INSCRIBED WITH AN INSPIRATIONAL QUOTE
- (D) MODEST SECONDARY SIDE ENTRANCE DECORATED WITH A TERRA COTTA CORNICE
- (E) SMALL ONE STORY BRICK ADDITION
- (F) LARGE OPEN SPACE WITH GARAGE BAYS AND EXPOSED GLUE LAM BEAMS: RETENTION OF FLOOR PLAN AND CONSTITUENT BUILDING MATERIALS
- (G) RETENSION OF EYE LEVEL WOOD TRIM AND DOOR SURROUND AT MAIN OFFICE
- (I) CENTRAL AUDITORIUM
- (J) RETENSION OF SQUARE SHAPED CIRCULATION PLAN - (SOME MODIFICATIONS. SEE N)
- (K) BATHROOMS - FIXTURES UPDATED WITH MODERN FIXTURES
- (L) RETENSION OF POLISHED CONCRETE FLOORS AND WOODEN HANDRAILS ON STAIRS
- (M) SOME RETENSION OF BUILT IN CABINETS AND DRAWERS. MANY CHALKBOARDS COVERED WITH TACK BOARD
- (N) EXTENSIVE CLASSROOM REMODEL ON 4TH FLOOR TAKES OVER EXISTING PORTION OF NORTHERN EAST/WEST CORRIDOR.

GENERAL NOTES:

- (1) CLASSROOMS ENLARGED AND / OR MODIFIED TO ACCOMMODATE NEW INSTRUCTIONAL USES ON ALL FLOORS



2 AUTO SHOP
SCALE: 1" = 30'-0"

1 WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL / CSC - 2ND FLOOR
SCALE: 1" = 30'-0"

