

Oregon Historic Site Form

Ainsworth School
2425 Vista Ave
Portland, Multnomah County

LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME

address: <u>2425 SW Vista Ave</u> <input type="checkbox"/> appr. addr	historic name: <u>Ainsworth School</u>
<u>Portland</u> <input type="checkbox"/> vcnty <u>Multnomah County</u>	current/ other names: <u>Ainsworth Elementary School</u>
Optional Information assoc addresses: (former addresses, intersections, etc.) location descr: (remote sites)	block nbr: _____ lot nbr: _____ tax lot nbr: _____ township: _____ range: _____ section: _____ 1/4: _____ zip: _____

PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS

resource type: <u>Building</u> height (# stories): <u>3</u>	total # eligible resources: <u>2</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>1912</u> (c.) <input type="checkbox"/> secondary date: _____ (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>Late Gothic Revival</u>	prim style comments: <u>Collegiate Gothic</u>
secondary style: _____	sec style comments: _____
primary siding: <u>Standard Brick</u>	siding comments: _____
secondary siding: <u>Terra Cotta: Other/Undefined</u>	
plan type: <u>School (General)</u>	architect: <u>Naramore, F A</u>
	builder: _____
comments/notes: <u>HRI Rank II.</u>	

GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS

survey project name or other grouping name	<u>PPS Historic Building Assessment 2009</u>	<u>Survey & Inventory Project</u>
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farmstead/cluster name: _____ external site #: 132
(ID# used in city/agency database)

SHPO INFO FOR THIS PROPERTY

NR date listed: _____
ILS survey date: 6/22/2009
RLS survey date: 6/22/2009
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

Situated in a primarily single family residential neighborhood in the Southwest Hills District of Portland, the Ainsworth Elementary School is located at 2425 SW Vista Avenue. The 3.3-acre campus consists of a main classroom building (132A), gymnasium addition (132B), a detached four-classroom wing (132F), an annex that is located on a hill above the main campus, a covered playshed (132C), and three interconnected portable buildings containing six classrooms (132D). Built in 1912, the Collegiate Gothic style main building is a flat roof, two-story, reinforced concrete structure with brick veneer and terra cotta and cast stone ornamentation. Facilities located in the main building include classrooms, a gymnasium, an auditorium, a library, playrooms, and an administrative office.

Architectural Description

The Ainsworth Elementary School faces SW Vista Avenue and is situated on a tree-lined but predominantly asphalt-covered campus with play grounds located to the northwest and southeast of the main building. A double height gymnasium was constructed in 1927-1928. A covered, open-sided play shed, built in 1935, is located adjacent to the northwest corner of the building. Three detached portable buildings located at the north end of the parcel were added between 1948 and 1953. The rectangular, detached classroom wing was constructed in 1953, while the one story, L-shape annex was built in 1962.

The two-story square-plan school building is oriented on a northwest-southeast axis. Clad in red brick, the unreinforced concrete building sits on a concrete foundation. The Collegiate Gothic style decorative brick work and terra cotta ornamentation are distinctive features of the building. Other notable exterior features include wood frame windows underneath four centered arch entrances, and parapet crenels. Terra cotta details include cartouches as well as coping and cornice. The entrance on the south elevation is illuminated by a stained glass window.

The fenestration consists primarily of symmetrically placed metal frame replacement windows with a horizontal sliding opening at the bottom of the window. Divided into three horizontal sections, the upper section of each window has been blocked off with louver vents inserted in the corners. Other windows consist of the original wood frame multipane windows on the stairwell landings between the first and second stories. Some of the original wood doors have been retained; others have been replaced by metal doors with glass windows.

The Ainsworth Annex, constructed in 1962, is located west of SW Spring Street on a wooded hill overlooking the main campus. The Annex is a single story, metal sided, L-shape building covered by a low and medium pitched gable roof. Supported by metal poles, the roof projects from the building to provide cover for the walkway that extends alongside the building. Fenestration consists primarily of metal frame hinged windows and metal outside doors.

Adjacent to the main building is a detached single story flat roof rectangular shape four-classroom wing built in 1953 at the south corner of the parcel. The primary façade, which is constructed of brick and faces the playground/courtyard, is dominated by large metal frame multipane pivot windows.

The portable building contains six classrooms and is located adjacent to the main building on the northeast corner of the parcel. This was added in the late 1940s/early 1950s. The rectangular shape building has both flat and gable roofs, vertical board and batten siding, and metal frame pivot windows.

The interior of the first and second floors of the main building is organized around an H-shaped hallway that connects to the classrooms and other facilities. The centrally located auditorium on the first floor is accessed from the main corridor. Considerably modified, the auditorium's original windows, chairs, and ceiling and wall lights have been removed. The stage has been partially modified, but retains some of the original terra cotta ceiling features and moldings. Contemporary wood entrance doors to the auditorium replace the original wood doors.

The corridors on the first and second floors retain their original configuration and features, including vintage tile and linoleum flooring. Metal lockers have been added in the corridors. Tubular fluorescent light fixtures are suspended from the acoustic tile clad ceiling. Original wood doors provide access to the classrooms from the hallways. The building's stairwells retain their original concrete steps and tile landings, plaster veneer walls, wood railings, and steam radiators.

The classrooms are arranged in a square floor plan. Standard features include built-in cabinetry for storing coats and supplies that are recessed in the interior walls. The classrooms exhibit their original configurations, height, wood flooring, molding, and chalk boards. The wooden vertical sliding closet doors, however, have been removed. All of the rooms feature plaster veneer walls and tubular fluorescent light fixtures suspended from the acoustic tile clad ceilings.

On the southwest corner of the ground floor is the gymnasium. The double height gymnasium retains its original configuration and ceiling height. Other original features include a concrete ceiling, wood frame, nine-over-nine pane windows, wood flooring, and brick walls. Contemporary fluorescent light fixtures provide illumination for the room. Other facilities that are located in the basement include a lunch room, a kitchen, a teacher's lounge, and a boiler room.

The building is heated by steam boilers located in a room behind the gymnasium. Radiators are found in the hallways and in the classrooms. Cool air is pushed through the building's vents by compressor-powered fans.

The interior layout of the detached classroom wing consists of a single loaded corridor that provides access to the adjacent classrooms. The hallways retain their original configuration and features, including its tile and linoleum floors. Tubular fluorescent light fixtures are suspended from

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the acoustic tile clad ceiling. Original wood doors provide access to the classrooms from the hallways.

The classrooms retain their original configurations, height, molding, and chalk boards. Standard features include built-in cabinetry for storing coats and supplies. All the rooms have plaster veneer walls and tubular fluorescent light fixtures suspended from the acoustic tile clad ceilings. Flooring consists of a mixture of original tile and linoleum floors.

The Ainsworth Annex is a one story, L-shape building consisting of a mixture of wood and metal frame windows and exterior wood doors. Tubular fluorescent light fixtures are suspended from the acoustic tile clad ceiling. Original metal doors provide access to the classrooms from the outside.

Alterations/Integrity

The first major modification to the Ainsworth School campus was the construction of the gymnasium in 1928. Later additions included the detached play shed in 1935, the six-classroom portables in the late 1940s/early 1950s, the detached classroom wing in 1953, and the annex in 1962.

The Ainsworth School retains a good degree of integrity. The numerous additions to the school campus do not detract from the architectural significance of the main building. Despite replacing most of the original wood frame windows and making considerable modifications to the auditorium, the Ainsworth School still exhibits many notable exterior and interior features.

HISTORY

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

Statement of Significance

Named for Captain John Ainsworth, an early Oregon explorer and Portland entrepreneur, the school was constructed in 1912 in response to development in the southwest area of Portland (Sydney 1979: 236; PPS Chronology Binder). The school was part of a dramatic building program begun by Portland Public Schools in the early 1900s. Gradually influenced by John Dewey's Progressive Education Movement, the school board responded 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 the dramatic increase in school-age children outstripped the district's existing classroom capacity and existing schools could not effectively serve areas of the city with new residential development (Cubberley 1915: 283-285, 288-290).

After several well-publicized school fires elsewhere in the United States, calls for a more fundamental change in the building stock of the district began as early as 1906 when 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).

At its opening Ainsworth School immediately received praise as "...the most modern and one of the best equipped schools in the United States. The building is of solid concrete, fireproof, and represents the latest word in school architecture" (Oregonian. 06-23-1914). The school was an early success by the district architect Floyd Naramore in responding to the new building requirements.

In 1908 Portland Public Schools had 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. Like Ainsworth, these new school buildings were often constructed of brick and concrete and were one or two 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, and assembly spaces (Powers and Corning 1937: 182).

The architect of Ainsworth School, Floyd Archibald Naramore, was adept in the requirements of school design from his tenure as architect and superintendent of school properties for the Portland Public Schools. A native of Illinois, Naramore attended the University of Wisconsin and graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1907. Naramore's first employment after his arrival in Portland in 1909 was as an engineer for the Northwest Bridge Works. In 1912, Naramore began his tenure at Portland Public School which would continue until 1919. During this period, Naramore designed 16 schools for the district including the Kennedy School, which gained notoriety as a single story response to the issue of fire safety in American public schools (Evening Telegram 11-03-1915).

Naramore's success with Portland Public Schools led to a similar position in Seattle, where he designed many of the city's most renowned schools. Architect Victor Steinbrueck credits Naramore for producing the best quality Motor Age architecture in the Puget Sound area (Steinbrueck 1974: 508). Naramore subsequently founded several private architectural partnerships in the Seattle area. The best known firm, Naramore, Bain, Brady & Johansen (or NBB&J) had early success designing large World War II building projects. In the last half century, the firm grew into one of the largest architectural practices in the world (Ritz 2003: 293).

For Ainsworth School, Naramore utilized Collegiate Gothic stylistic elements to ornament the brick veneer structure. The Collegiate Gothic style was considered well suited to portray the civic stature of the school. Architectural revivals, such as Classical Revival, Colonial Revival, and Collegiate Gothic were also viewed as inspirational and appropriate for educational settings (Betelle 1919: 28; Sibley 1923: 66; Patton 1967: 1-8).

Designed to be expanded over time, Ainsworth School has evolved following the unit plan developed by Naramore. The school property was acquired

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for \$14,000 in 1912 and the original building was constructed in 1912 for \$101,383 (PPS School Chronology Binder). The school expanded in 1928 to include a gymnasium. Ainsworth expanded further with classrooms being built along Elm Street in 1948 and 1952 and in 1953. Additional overcrowding precipitated the construction of the Ainsworth Annex in 1962 on a nearby property.

The integrity of the Ainsworth School is retained due to the minimal alterations made to its plan and both exterior and interior finishes. The additions made to the school do not detract from the architectural significance of the main building. The 1912 Collegiate Gothic style school is recommended as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) for its association with progressive era public school construction in Portland (Criterion A). The school is also a good example of the two-story Collegiate Gothic style school buildings that were constructed during the early-twentieth century. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of the style as applied by Floyd Naramore to school buildings in Portland, and therefore it is eligible for listing in 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

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.

Evening Telegram 'First Unit of New Kennedy School' 11 03 1915

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

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

Oregonian "New School Ready." 06-23-1914.

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

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.

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

Vaughan, Thomas, and Virginia Guest Ferriday, Space Style and Structure: Building in Northwest America. Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 1974.

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

Steinbrueck, Victor. "Everyday Architecture in the Puget Sound Area." in Space, Style and Structure. Ed. Thomas Vaughan, Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 1974. p. 508.



North elevation entry



West elevation (and covered play shed)



East elevation



Classroom Annex east and south elevations



North elevation detached wing

**Ainsworth School
Exterior Photos
ENTRIX, 2009**



Corridor facing south



Gymnasium facing south and west



Classroom built-ins



Stairwell facing south



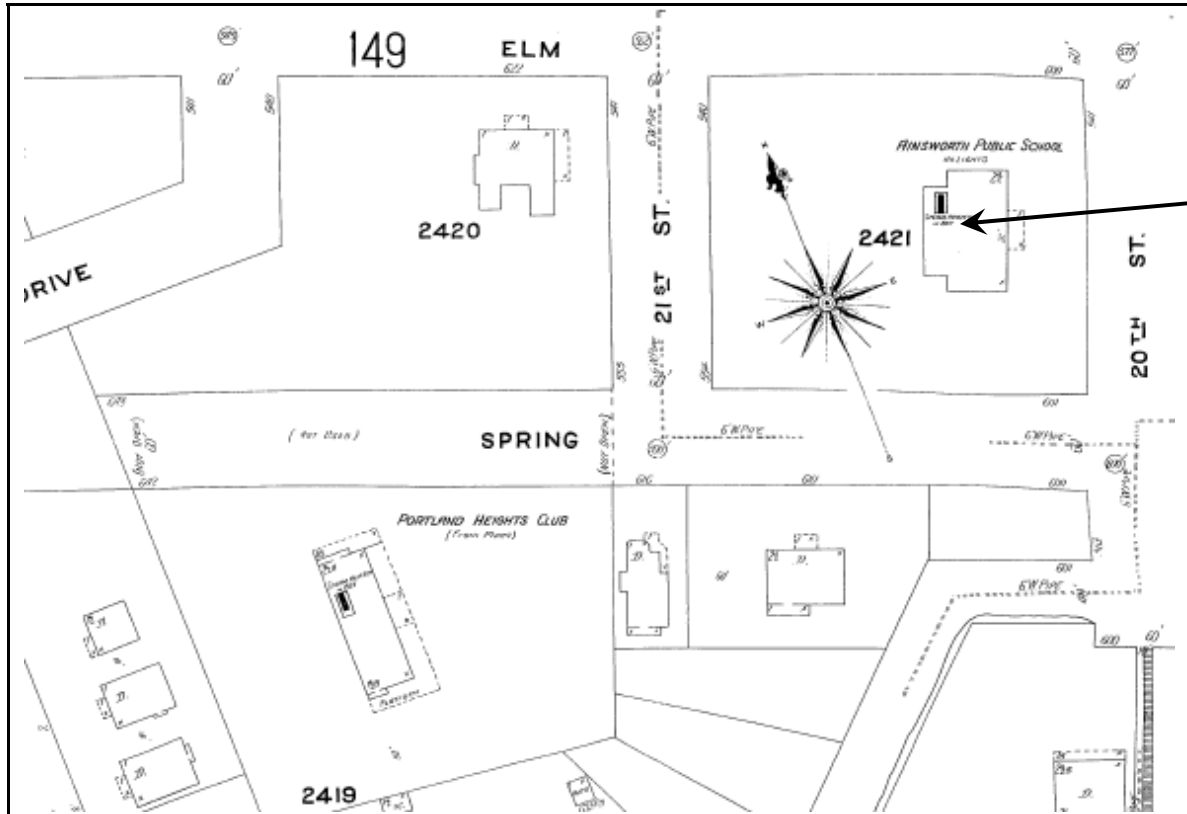
Classroom in main building

**Ainsworth School
Interior Photos
ENTRIX, 2009**



ENTRIX

Down to Earth. Down to Business.™

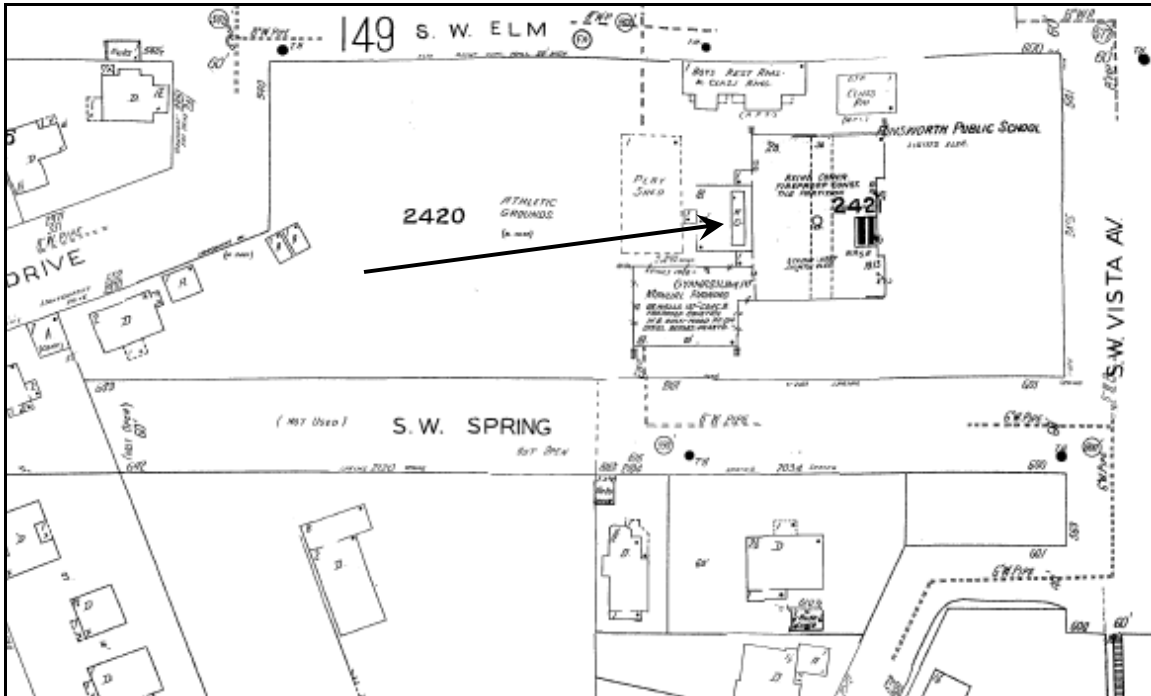


1924-1928 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Portland, Oregon, Map 157. Arrow points to Ainsworth Public School.



ENTRIX

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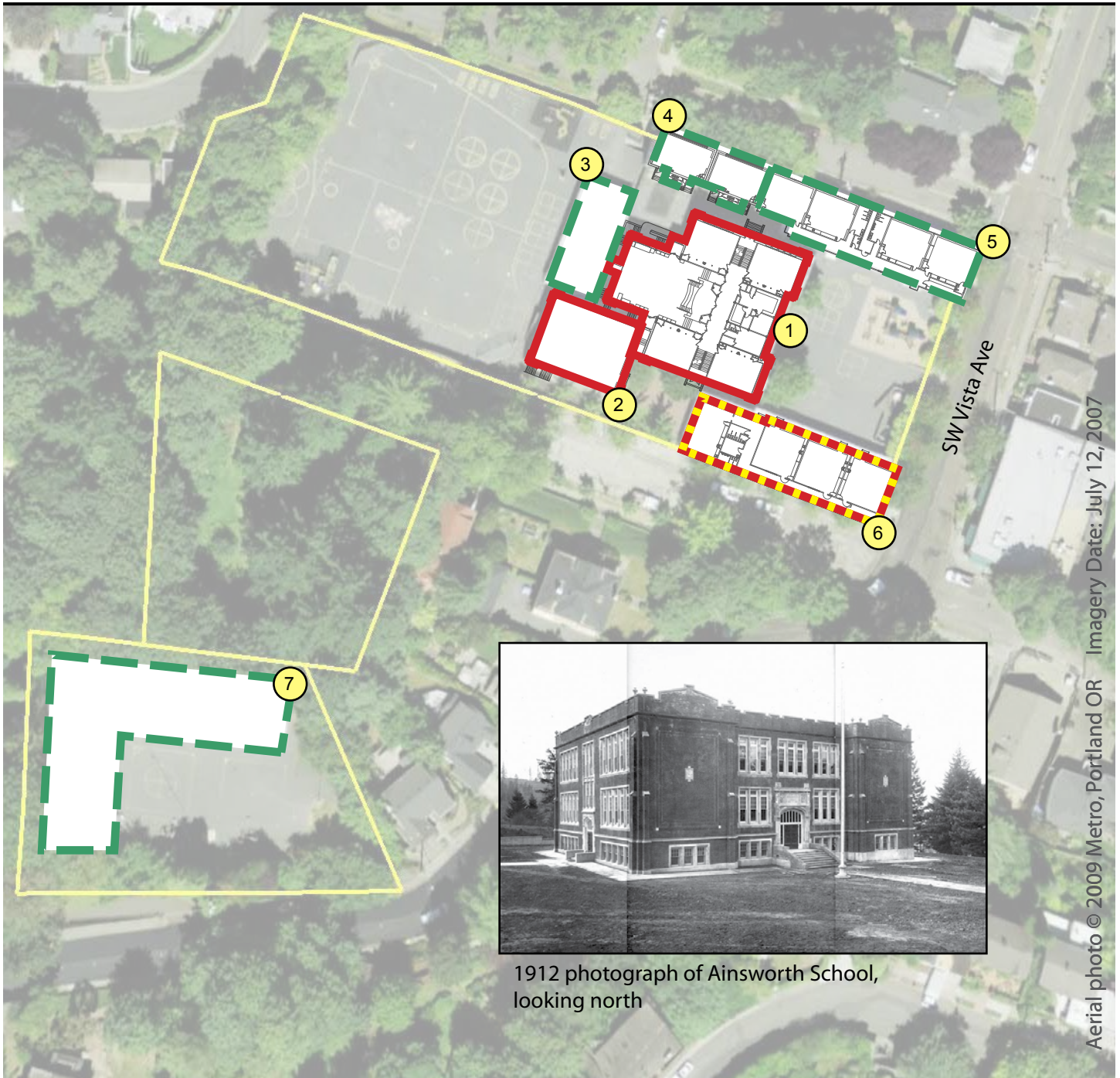


Updated to 1950, Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Portland, Oregon, Map 157. Arrow points to Ainsworth Public School. Note the change in building location, the removal of 21st Street and name change of 20th Street, and the removal of the house that was once situated on the property.

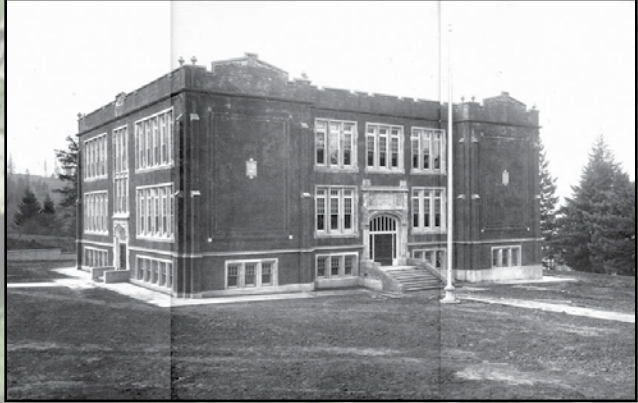
Ainsworth School

2425 SW Vista Ave, Portland OR, 97201

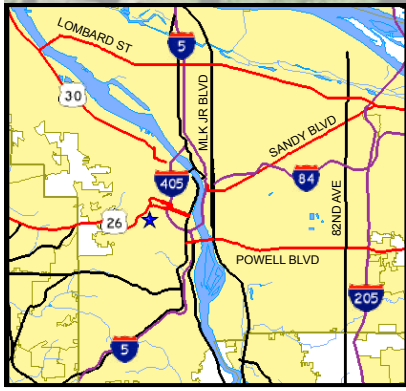
[View Site in Google Maps](#)






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



1912 photograph of Ainsworth School, looking north



Historical Significance and Building Integrity

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



Building Periods

1. Main Building (132A), 1912
2. Gym (132B), 1928
3. Play Shed (132C), 1935
4. Classroom Add. (132D), 1948
5. Classroom Add. (132E), 1952
6. Classroom Add. (132F), 1953
7. Ainsworth Annex (132G), 1963



AINSWORTH ELEMENTARY – 132

2425 SW VISTA AVE 97201

PPS HISTORIC ASSESSMENT



DRAWING: ANNOTATED PLAN

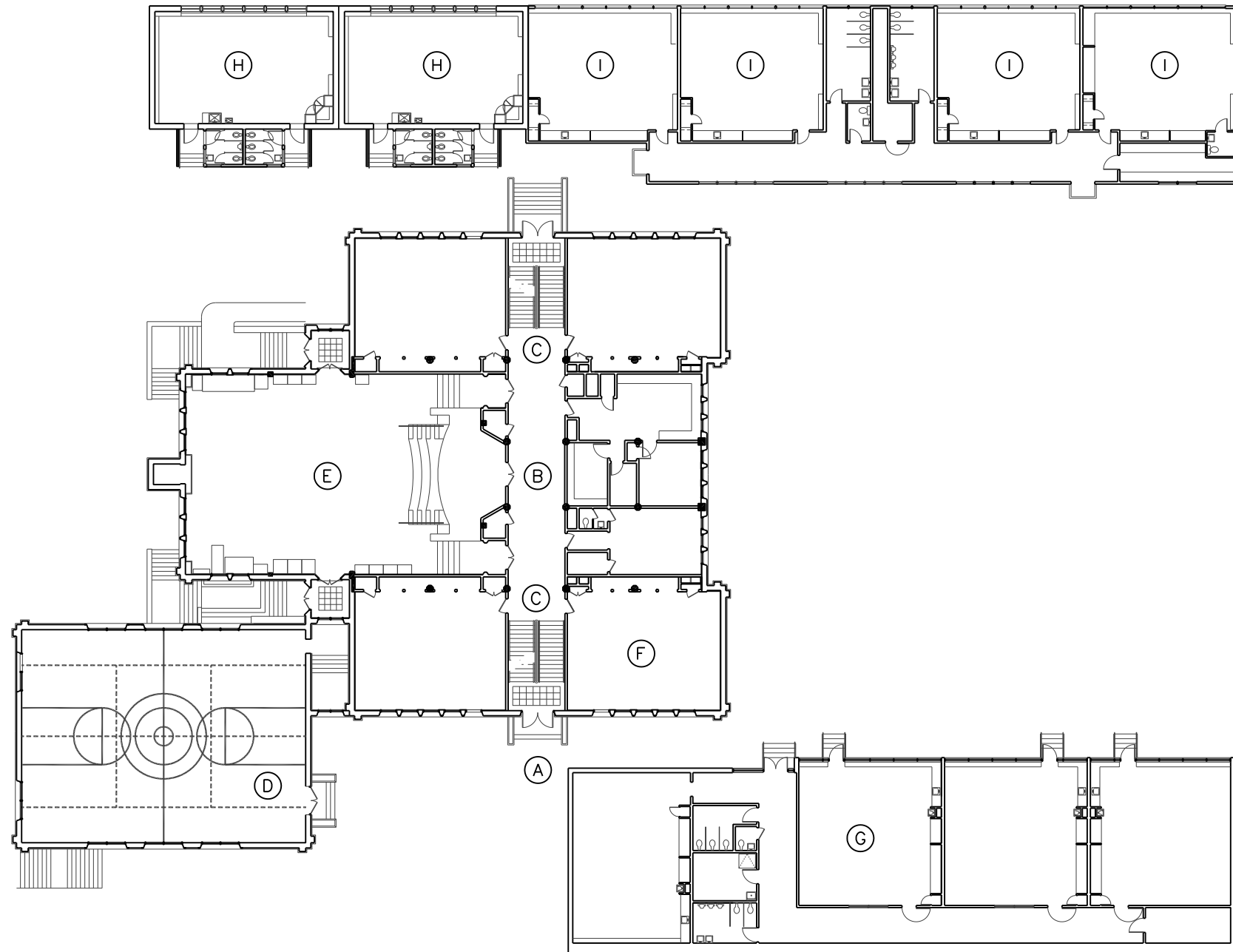
DATE: Sept. 4, 2009

KEYNOTES:

- (A) THE PRIMARY ENTRY TO THE 1912 SCHOOL IS ON THE NORTH WING FROM S.W. VISTA AVENUE.
- (B) A CENTRAL CORRIDOR DIVIDES THE MAIN SCHOOL BUILDING BILATERALLY.
- (C) STAIRCASES ARE LOCATED IN THE NORTH AND SOUTH WINGS OF THE BUILDING.
- (D) THE DOUBLE HEIGHT GYMNASIUM RETAINS ITS ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION AND CEILING HEIGHT. OTHER ORIGINAL FEATURES INCLUDE A CONCRETE CEILING, WOOD FRAME, NINE-OVER-NINE PANE WINDOWS, WOOD FLOORING, AND BRICK WALLS.
- (E) THE DOUBLE HEIGHT 1928 AUDITORIUM OCCUPIES THE NORTHWEST SIDE OF THE SCHOOL. CONSIDERABLY MODIFIED, THE ORIGINAL WINDOWS, CHAIRS AND CEILING AND WALL LIGHTS HAVE BEEN REMOVED. THE STAGE HAS BEEN PARTIALLY MODIFIED. SOME OF THE ORIGINAL TERRA COTTA CEILING FEATURES AND MOLDING HAVE BEEN RETAINED. CONTEMPORARY WOOD ENTRANCE DOORS TO THE AUDITORIUM HAVE REPLACED THE ORIGINAL WOOD DOORS.
- (F) THE CLASSROOMS ARE PRIMARILY SQUARE IN PLAN. STANDARD FEATURES INCLUDE BUILT-IN CABINETRY FOR STORING COATS AND SUPPLIES THAT ARE RECESSED IN THE INTERIOR WALLS. THE CLASSROOMS EXHIBIT THEIR ORIGINAL CONFIGURATIONS, HEIGHT, WOOD FLOORING, MOLDING, AND CHALK BOARDS.
- (G) THIS WING WAS ADDED TO THE CAMPUS IN 1953. THE SINGLE STORY, FLAT ROOF, BUILDING PROVIDES SPACE FOR 4 CLASSROOMS. THE PRIMARY FAÇADE, WHICH IS CONSTRUCTED OF BRICK IS DOMINATED BY LARGE METAL FRAME, MULTI-PANE, HINGED WINDOWS.
- (H) CLASSROOMS ADDED IN 1948
- (I) CLASSROOMS ADDED IN 1952
- (J) AINSWORTH ANNEX (NOT IN PLAN), CONSTRUCTED IN 1962, IS LOCATED WEST OF SW SPRING STREET ON A WOODED HILL OVERLOOKING THE MAIN CAMPUS. THE ANNEX IS A SINGLE STORY, METAL SIDED, L-SHAPE BUILDING. THE ROOFLINE PROJECTS TO PROVIDE COVER FOR THE EXTERIOR WALKWAY.

GENERAL NOTES:

- ① THE FENESTRATION CONSISTS PRIMARILY OF SYMMETRICALLY PLACED, METAL FRAME REPLACEMENT WINDOWS WITH A HORIZONTAL SLIDING OPENING AT THE BOTTOM OF THE WINDOW.
- ② THE COLLEGIATE GOTHIC STYLE BUILDING IS DISTINGUISHED BY ITS DECORATIVE BRICK WORK AND TERRA COTTA ORNAMENTATION. NOTABLE EXTERIOR FEATURES INCLUDE WOOD FRAME WINDOWS UNDERNEATH TUDOR ARCH ENTRANCES, ROOFLINE BATTLEMENTS, AND TERRA COTTA CARTOUCHES, COPING AND CORNICE.



1 AINSWORTH ELEMENTARY – 1ST FLOOR
SCALE: 1" = 30'-0"