Oregon Historic Site Form

Beverly Cleary - Fernwood Campus
1915 33rd Ave
Portland, Multnomah County

LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME

address: **1915 NE 33rd Ave** ☐ apprx. addrs

Portland ☐ vcnty **Multnomah County**

historic name: **Beverly Cleary - Fernwood Campus**

current/ other names: **Fernwood Grammar School**

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: **Building** height (# stories): **3**

elig. evaluation: **not eligible/non-contributing**

primary constr date: **1911** (c.) ☐ secondary date: **1977** (c.) ☐
(optional--use for major addns)

primary orig use: **School**

secondary orig use:

primary style: **Classical Revival: other**

secondary style:

primary siding: **Standard Brick**

secondary siding: **Glazed Terra-Cotta**

plan type: **School (General)**

comments/notes: **The property is listed as an HRI Rank II resource.**

total # eligible resources: **0** total # ineligible resources: **2**

NR status:

NR date listed: ____ (indiv listed only; see Grouping for hist dist)

orig use comments:

prim style comments:

sec style comments:

siding comments:

architect: **Ellis Lawrence**

builder:

GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS

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

farmstead/cluster name:

external site #: 249
(ID# used in city/agency database)

SHPO INFO FOR THIS PROPERTY

NR date listed: ____ ____

ILS survey date: **7/2/2009**

RLS survey date: **7/2/2009**

Gen File date: ____

106 Project(s)

South elevation.

ARCHITECTURAL / PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

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

Description Summary

Situated in the Grant Park neighborhood of east Portland, the Fernwood Middle School campus consists of a 1911-1924 U-shaped building (249A) with a large 1978 addition (249B). The main building retains Classical Revival-style elements and is two-stories in height with a lighted basement. It is a reinforced concrete building with brick veneer. Ornamentation includes decorative brickwork, terra cotta belt courses, and terra cotta tiles. Other ornamentation includes pronounced terra cotta cornices and flat roofs with terra cotta caps along the parapets. Bands of aluminum windows provide the fenestration. The main entrance is marked by double doors, a terra cotta segmental pediment, and columns. While less ornate, the other entrances feature double-doors with transoms ornamented by terra cotta surrounds and cornices. Double loaded corridors provide access to the administrative offices, classrooms, and recreation spaces. The property also includes a 1978 portable classroom (249P1).

Architectural Description

Fernwood Elementary School is situated in the Grant Park neighborhood of east Portland at 1915 NE 33rd Street. The neighborhood consists of single family residences built primarily between 1920 and 1950 (Sanborn Maps 1924-1928, Sanborn Map updated to 1950). Play areas and open space occupy the western end of the campus and are sited to the north of NE Hancock Street. A large brick addition, which extends along the north (rear) and east (side) elevations of the primary school building, was added in 1978.

The primary school building, which was constructed in phases between 1911 and 1924, has a U-shaped plan with an auditorium located off the rear of the central wing. The schools primary entrance was located between the wings that form the U-shape. However, the construction of the 1978 addition reoriented the school's entrance to NE 33rd Street. Rectangular classrooms and administrative offices comprise the other spaces located along the U-shaped corridor. Two gymnasiums (1924) once located on the east and west sides of the original building were removed in 1978.

The two-story Classical Revival brick veneered building is ornamented by decorative brickwork, terra cotta belt courses, cornices, and tiles. The original entrance to the building was located off NE Hancock and between the wings that form the horseshoe-shaped plan; this entrance is marked by double doors and terra cotta surrounds and columns. While less ornate, the other entrances feature double-doors with transoms and terra cotta cornices. The basic unit of fenestration consists of bands of aluminum windows. The primary building rests on a poured concrete foundation and is capped by a flat roof that features terra cotta caps along the parapet.

The principal entrances located along the south (front) and west (side) elevations open into stairwells that are illuminated by windows that cap the entry doors. The double loaded corridors are lined with pilasters and wood molding. One the first floor wall and recessed fixtures light the hallways. On the second floor tubular light fixtures suspend from the acoustic ceiling tile. Wood doors with center or side lights provide access to the classrooms. Flooring consists of concrete, linoleum tiles, and carpeting.

The classrooms feature a rectangular plan with a recessed area that features cupboards. Some of the classrooms feature their original built-ins. Classroom windows line the exterior walls and retain their wood surrounds. The building is heated by boilers located in the basement. Classrooms and other spaces are heated through wall grates.

Alterations/ Integrity

The primary two-story building was constructed in units between 1911 and 1924. By 1925 the horseshoe-shaped building had accumulated six units that included an auditorium to the north of the central wing (1923), a boy's gym at the northeast end of the east wing, and a girls gym off the northwest end of the west wing (1924) (PPS Architectural Plans Archive). Additional alterations to the building include the demolition of the gymnasiums (girl's and boy's) in 1977 and the construction of two story brick addition, which extends along the north and east ends of the primary school building, in 1978. The addition reoriented the building entrance to NE 33rd Street. The original entrance still exists; however, on the interior the space was reconfigured into a media center. Alterations include the reconfiguration of administrative offices (1961), first floor shop and home economics classrooms (1975), and second floor classrooms (1984). Other alterations include the replacement of floor tiles, windows (1983, 1984), interior doors, lighting fixtures, and some classroom built-ins.

The Fernwood Middle School does not have integrity of design and materials to consider it eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The 1977 demolition of two of the 1920s units and the incompatible addition and numerous interior alterations, most notably the reorientation of the building and the removal of the front (south) interior entry, have affected the ability of the property to convey its historic significance.

HISTORY

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

Statement of Significance

Built between 1911 and 1923, Fernwood Middle School was constructed during a period of Progressive Era growth that responded to changing city demographics and ideas concerning safety, sanitation, and child centered instruction (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 and existing schools could not effectively serve areas of the city where new residential development was occurring (Cubberley 1915: 283-285, 288-290). In addition, after several well-publicized school fires in U.S. cities, calls for a more fundamental change in the building construction began as early as 1906 (Oregonian, 10-31-1906). On August 16, 1910, the Portland City Council enacted a requirement that all schools constructed after January 1, 1911 would have to be of fireproof construction (Powers and Corning 1937: 183). Many of Portland's new fireproof buildings, such as Fernwood, were constructed of brick and concrete. The school is similar in plan to the two or three-story horseshoe-shaped schools that were constructed with a lateral corridor connected to the front entrance by one or more short hallways. Like PPS buildings constructed during this period, Fernwood was constructed in four units (sometimes referred to as extensible schools) and contained more differentiated and increasingly specialized space (Powers and Corning 1937: 182).

The firm of Lawrence and Holford was retained to design the Fernwood Middle School. Ellis F. Lawrence, the future dean of the University of Oregon's School of Architecture, was one of the most significant architects in Portland during the early twentieth century. The majority of Portland Public School (PPS) buildings constructed between 1908 and 1932 were designed by PPS district architects, George Jones and Floyd Naramore. Fernwood and the gym at Washington High School were Lawrence's only commissions for PPS.

For Fernwood Middle School, Lawrence adopted the building program and principles that dominated the discourse for school design during the first half of the twentieth century. The well-executed style and construction of the building was promoted in the period publication "School Architecture" with four plates consisting of floor plans and photographs. Interestingly, neither the school plans nor the photographs indicate that the school was constructed incrementally. They also indicate the presence of the auditorium in the plans even though the book was published before it was constructed (Donovan 1921: 619-621).

Fernwood Middle School was constructed in the Classical Revival style that was popular for educational buildings during the first half of the twentieth-century. This style, which is characterized by symmetry and details such as corbel-supported cornices, entrances adorned with Doric or Ionic-Order engaged-columns, cartouches, quoins, and round-arch or square multi-paned windows was thought of as well suited to convey the civic stature of schools of this period. Architectural revivals, such as Classical Revival, Colonial Revival, and Collegiate Gothic, were viewed as inspirational and appropriate for educational settings (Betelle 1919: 28; Sibley 1923: 66; Patton 1967: 1-8).

While Fernwood Middle School is a notable historic resource, it does not have integrity of design, setting, and materials to consider it eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

RESEARCH INFORMATION

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

- ☐ Title Records
- ☑ Sanborn Maps
- ☐ Obituaries
- ☐ City Directories
- ☐ Census Records
- ☑ Biographical Sources
- ☑ Newspapers
- ☐ Building Permits
- ☐ Property Tax Records
- ☑ SHPO Files
- ☐ State Archives
- ☐ State Library
- ☑ Local Histories
- ☐ Interviews
- ☑ Historic Photographs

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. Knopt, 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.

Donovan, John J. School Architecture: Principles and Practices. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921.

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

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

Portland Public Schools. School Chronology Binder. PPS Archives, Portland, Oregon.

_____. Fernwood Elementary School. Facility Profile.

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.

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 (294A), south (original front) elevation, looking north.

Main building (249A) and 1978 addition (249B), west (side) elevations, looking northeast.

Main building (249A), south (original front) elevation, looking northeast.

1978 addition (249B), east (front) elevation, looking northwest.

Main building (249A), south and west (side) elevations, looking northeast.

Beverly Cleary @ Fernwood Campus
Exterior Photos
ENTRIX, 2009

Main building (249A), media room (formally main entrance lobby), looking westward.

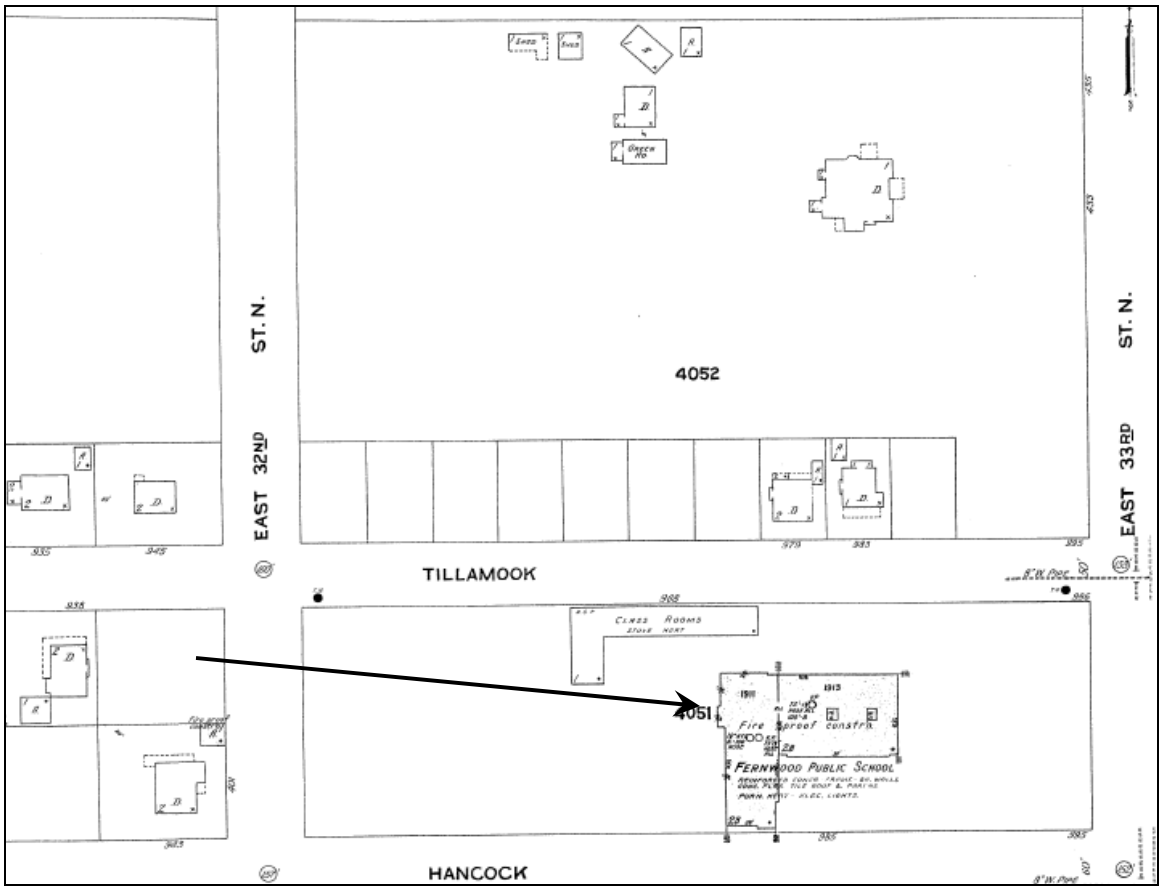
Main building (249A), auditorium, looking south.

Main building (249A), second floor classroom, looking northeast.

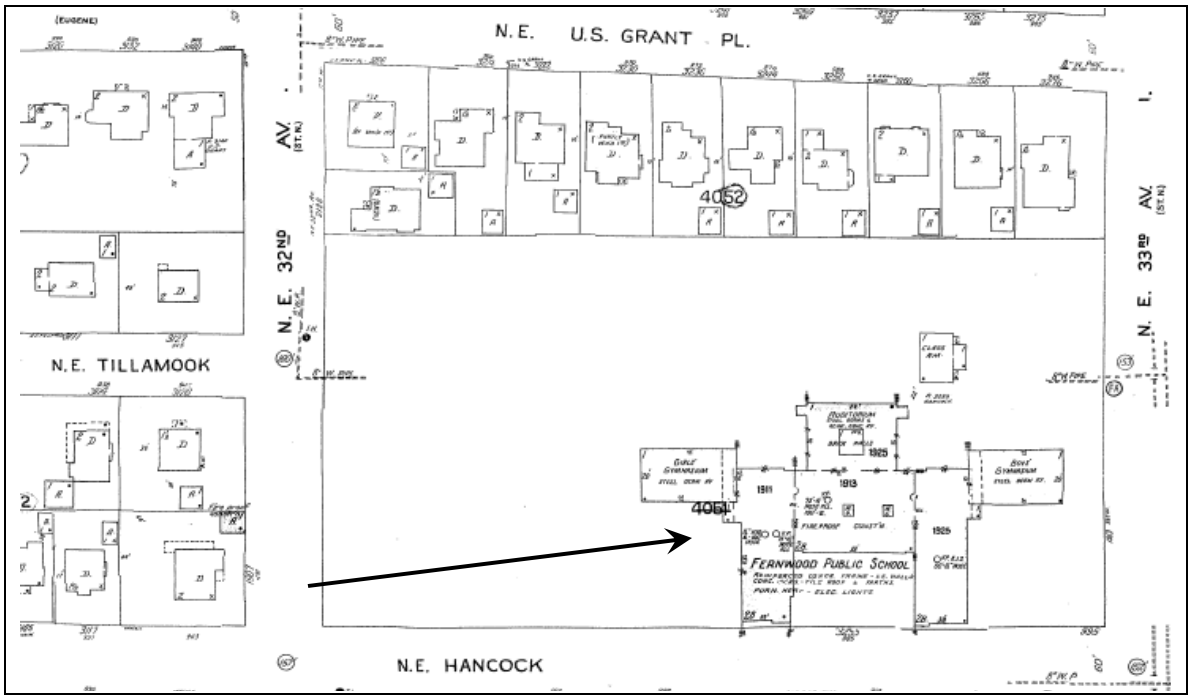
1978 addition (249B), first floor hallway with exposed exterior wall of main building, looking north.

Main building (249A), second floor staircase, looking south.

Beverly Cleary @ Fernwood Campus
Interior Photos
ENTRIX, 2009



1924-1928, Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Portland, Oregon, Map 654. Arrow points to the first two units of the Fernwood Public School. Note the additional frame classroom building also on the property.

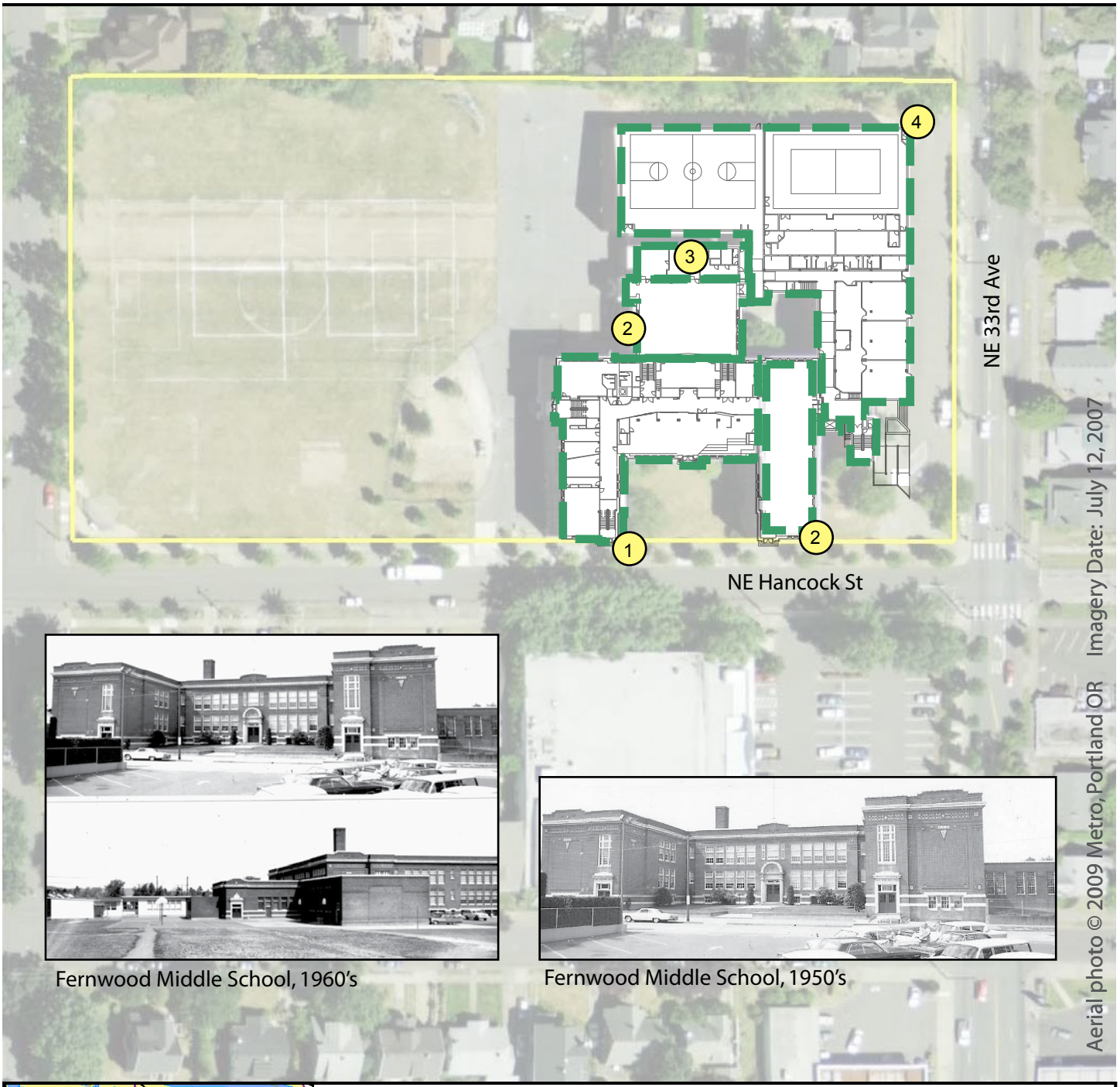


Updated to 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Portland, Oregon, Map 654. Arrow points to Fernwood Public School. Note school and street changes.

Beverly Cleary School (Fernwood Campus)

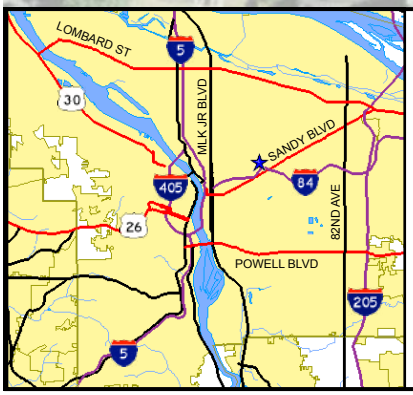
1915 NE 33rd St, Portland OR, 97212

View Site in Google Maps



Fernwood Middle School, 1960's

Fernwood Middle School, 1950's



Historical Significance and Building Integrity

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

N

0' 50' 100' 200'

Building Periods

1. Original Building (249A), 1911
2. Addition (249A), 1924
3. Addition (249A), 1952
4. Addition (249B), 1978