

# Oregon Historic Site Form

Bridger School  
7910 Market St  
Portland, Multnomah County

## LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME

address: <u>7910 SE Market St</u> <input type="checkbox"/> apprx. addr	historic name: <u>Bridger School</u>
<u>Portland</u> <input type="checkbox"/> vcnty <u>Multnomah County</u>	current/ other names: <u>Hudson Primary, Bridger 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>1</u>	total # eligible resources: <u>0</u> total # ineligible resources: <u>2</u>
elig. evaluation: <u>not eligible/non-contributing</u>	NR status: _____ NR date listed: _____ (indiv listed only; see Grouping for hist dist)
primary constr date: <u>1951</u> (c.) <input type="checkbox"/> secondary date: <u>1958</u> (c.) <input type="checkbox"/> (optional--use for major addns)	orig use comments: _____
primary orig use: <u>School</u>	prim style comments: _____
secondary orig use: _____	sec style comments: _____
primary style: <u>International</u>	siding comments: _____
secondary style: _____	architect: <u>Raymond Thompson</u>
primary siding: <u>Standard Brick</u>	builder: _____
secondary siding: _____	
plan type: <u>School (General)</u>	
comments/notes:	

## GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS

survey project name or other grouping name	<u>PPS Historic Building Assessment 2009</u>	<u>Survey &amp; Inventory Project</u>
farmstead/cluster name:		external site #: <u>238</u> (ID# used in city/agency database)

## SHPO INFO FOR THIS PROPERTY

NR date listed: \_\_\_\_\_  
ILS survey date: 7/8/2009  
RLS survey date: 7/8/2009  
Gen File date: \_\_\_\_\_  
**106 Project(s)**



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## ARCHITECTURAL / PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

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

### Description Summary

The Bridger School (originally Hudson Primary) is a one story brick veneer building designed in the International style. The campus consists of a single story brick-faced building built in 1951 expanded to form a modified E-shaped plan in 1959 (238A), and two portable classroom buildings (238P1). The wings that comprise the arms of the E-shaped plan are separated by two exterior courtyards and form a finger plan type school. The building features a linear composition and asymmetrical plan. These International style elements, in addition to bands of aluminum windows, flat or low sloped gable roofs, and lack of ornamentation, serve to reinforce the ideals of functionalism and minimalism.

### Architectural Description

The Bridger School (originally Hudson Primary) is situated in the Montavilla neighborhood of East Portland at 7910 SE Market Street. The campus occupies an irregular shaped parcel that is bound on the north by SE Market Street, on the east by SE 80th Street, on the south by SE Mill Street, and on the west by single family homes. The school is located on the east end of the campus, and parking is provided along the north and west sides of the building. Recreational facilities include playground space along the south end of the building, and play fields occupy the west end of the campus. Two portable classroom buildings are located to the south of the main facility and along the east end of the campus.

The 1951/1959 Bridger School features a modified E-shaped finger plan. The central spine of the building is oriented on an east-west axis and runs parallel to SE Market Street. The three wings that comprise the short lateral extensions of the E shape are sited on a north-south axis. Rectangular classrooms and administrative offices are located along the central wing. The southeast wing consists of additional classrooms, the central wing consists of a library, and the southwestern wing provides space for a cafeteria, gymnasium and additional classrooms. Two exterior courtyards are formed by the three wings that project from the central spine. Doorways located along the exterior wall of the classrooms and at the end of hallways provide access to the expansive campus.

The single story International style influenced wood frame building is clad in brick and horizontal wood siding. The wings that make up the facility rest on concrete foundations and are capped by flat and low sloped gable roofs. Plywood panels are located on the upper portion of the walls above the windows. The long single story main wing and bands of metal hopper windows serve to emphasize the horizontal massing of the building. The double height concrete wings, which provide space for a cafeteria and gymnasium, are the only vertical elements. Fixed windows are located along the exterior walls of prominent public spaces such as the gymnasium, library, and multipurpose room.

The primary entrance, which is located along the east side of the north (front) elevation, is recessed within the corner of a projecting bay. The bay features architectural concrete panels and a band of metal hopper windows. The fascia of the bay bears the school's name in bronze lettering. The entrance is marked by metal doors with center lights, side lights, and transoms. Secondary entrances, located off short hallways, also feature double metal doors with center lights, side lights, and transoms.

The principal entrance opens into a hallway that bisects the main corridor. The hallway, which is flanked by the administrative offices and classrooms, features an elevated ceiling. The main corridor extends east-west through the middle of the building and is bisected by three hallways. At the end of the central bisecting hallway, and opposite the main entrance to the building, is the library. The library features a sloping ceiling with fixed metal windows along the side walls. Along the western bisecting hallway are the multipurpose room and gymnasium. The multipurpose room, which is lighted with fixed metal windows, features fold down tables and wood ceiling beams. A wood trimmed stage, located at the south end of the room, provides for use as an auditorium. The gymnasium features concrete walls and wood ceiling beams.

The central section of the double-loaded corridor features smooth plaster walls with a rubber base. The east and west ends of the corridor feature vinyl tile wainscot with a metal cap and a rubber base. Tubular fluorescent light fixtures are suspended from the acoustic tile clad ceiling. Flooring throughout the building consists of asphalt tile and carpet. The classrooms are rectangular in plan with a recessed wardrobe, closet, and sink area along one wall. The rooms feature plaster walls with birch plywood wainscot and molding. Classroom doors are hollow core birch wood with center lights. The building is heated by boilers that are located off the central corridor of the main (1951) building. Metal heating units are located in the hallways and consult units are located beneath classroom windows.

The campus also consists of two portable buildings which are sited side-by-side on a north-south axis. The northern building (1966) is clad in horizontal wood siding and features a low sloped gable roof with wide eaves and aluminum hopper windows. The southern building (2007) is clad in T-1-11 siding and features a low sloped gable roof with narrow eaves and aluminum slider windows.

### Alterations/Integrity

Bridger School has been modified over time to meet the evolving needs of Portland Public Schools. The original T-shaped building was constructed in 1951; additions were made to the east and west (side) elevations in 1959 which served to create a modified E-shaped plan. On the interior these additions provided space for additional classrooms along the east elevation and a gymnasium, multipurpose room, kitchen, and classrooms along the west elevation. Other alterations include the remodeling of the original play court into a library and the addition of a doorway beyond the library, which provides a connection to one of the courtyards. The administrative offices were remodeled in 1990. Some of the classroom floors were covered in carpet in 1983 (PPS Facility Profile and Plans). These alterations have reduced the integrity of the design, materials, workmanship, and feeling associated with the 1951 Bridger School.

## HISTORY

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

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## Statement of Significance

Built in 1951 and expanded in 1959, Bridger 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 (PPS 1945: 2). The ballot measure enabled the 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 (PPS 1945: 2-3). During the 1940s there was a substantial increase in the number of children in the extreme east and southeast areas of Portland. The Montavilla neighborhood showed significant increases of school age children (PPS 1945:18). Beginning with the 1945 bond measure, PPS embarked on an effort to improve its school facilities through renovations, additions, and new construction of over fifty schools between 1945 and 1970. Land for the Bridger (originally Hudson Primary) campus was purchased in 1949 for a cost of \$27,000 and the original building was constructed for \$152,638 (PPS Chronology).

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, glass block, 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).

The architects of Bridger School, Raymond Thompson (1951) and Wick and Hilgers (1959 Additions), adopted the building program and principles that dominated the discourse for school design during the second half of the twentieth century. PPS architect Raymond Thompson designed the original 1951 building known as Hudson Primary School. A native of Oregon, Raymond Thompson obtained a Bachelor of Architecture from the University of Oregon and worked for Pietro Belluschi. He became the district architect for Portland Public Schools in 1951 and went on to design additions for Ainsworth, Beaumont, Kellogg School, Laurelhurst, as well as the main buildings at Normandale, Sacajawea, Bridger, and Lewis schools. Thompson worked for the district until 1953 when he established a firm with his wife, Polly Povey Thompson.

In 1959, the Hudson Primary School (now Bridger) was expanded into an elementary school by Wick and Hilgers AIA. The firm was founded by Clarence Wick and Albert Hilgers, two graduates of the University of Oregon's School of Architecture. They were responsible for the design of many public facilities in the Northwest. The firm's first large commission was as the architects of record for the Portland Chamber of Commerce Visitors Information Center designed by John Yeon (1945). The firm was responsible for the design of the School of Music (1949), Commonwealth Hall (1951) at the University of Oregon, and the Wolverton Memorial Pool at the Oregon College of Education (1955). In addition, the designed a number of Portland public schools including Applegate Elementary School and additions to Astor, Chief Joseph, Faubion, and Bridger (Ritz 2002 424-425, 178-179).

Bridger Elementary employed the finger plan type school that became popular in the post-war period. Similar to other schools of this type, Bridger features a single story E-shaped building with wings separated by exterior courtyards. The construction of the facility, wood frame with brick veneer, allowed for economic building and ease of expansion. Mass produced materials including aluminum windows and glass block provided economical decoration.

While Bridger School is associated with PPS post war development, the building does not display the level of integrity and significance to make it eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Although designed by a prominent architecture firm in Portland, archival research does not indicate that the school was a major commission or characteristic of their work. The building incorporates International style elements and building materials; however, compared to other Portland Public Schools constructed during this period, Bridger School it is not a strong example of mid-twentieth century architectural design. Although many of the schools of the period were designed to be expanded, the 1959 additions are incompatible with the original design and materials. Due to the loss of integrity the building is not eligible for the NRHP under Criterion 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

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## Bibliography: Bibliography

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.

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_. *School Chronology Binder*. PPS Archives, Portland, Oregon.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Bridger Elementary School. Facility Plans*.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Bridger 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.

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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%2F-sanborn.umi.com.catalog.multcolib.org%3A80%2F>. Accessed June 16, 2009.



Main building (238A), north (front) elevation looking south.



1959 Addition (238A), west (side) elevation, looking east.



Main building (238A), east (side) elevation looking northwest.



Main building (238A), south (rear) elevation between library and classroom wing, looking north.



Main building (238A), west end of the north (front) elevation, looking southeast.



Main building (238A), central corridor, looking west.



1959 West Addition (238A), gymnasium, looking southwest.



Main building (238A), library, looking south.



1959 East Addition (238A), classroom looking southeast.

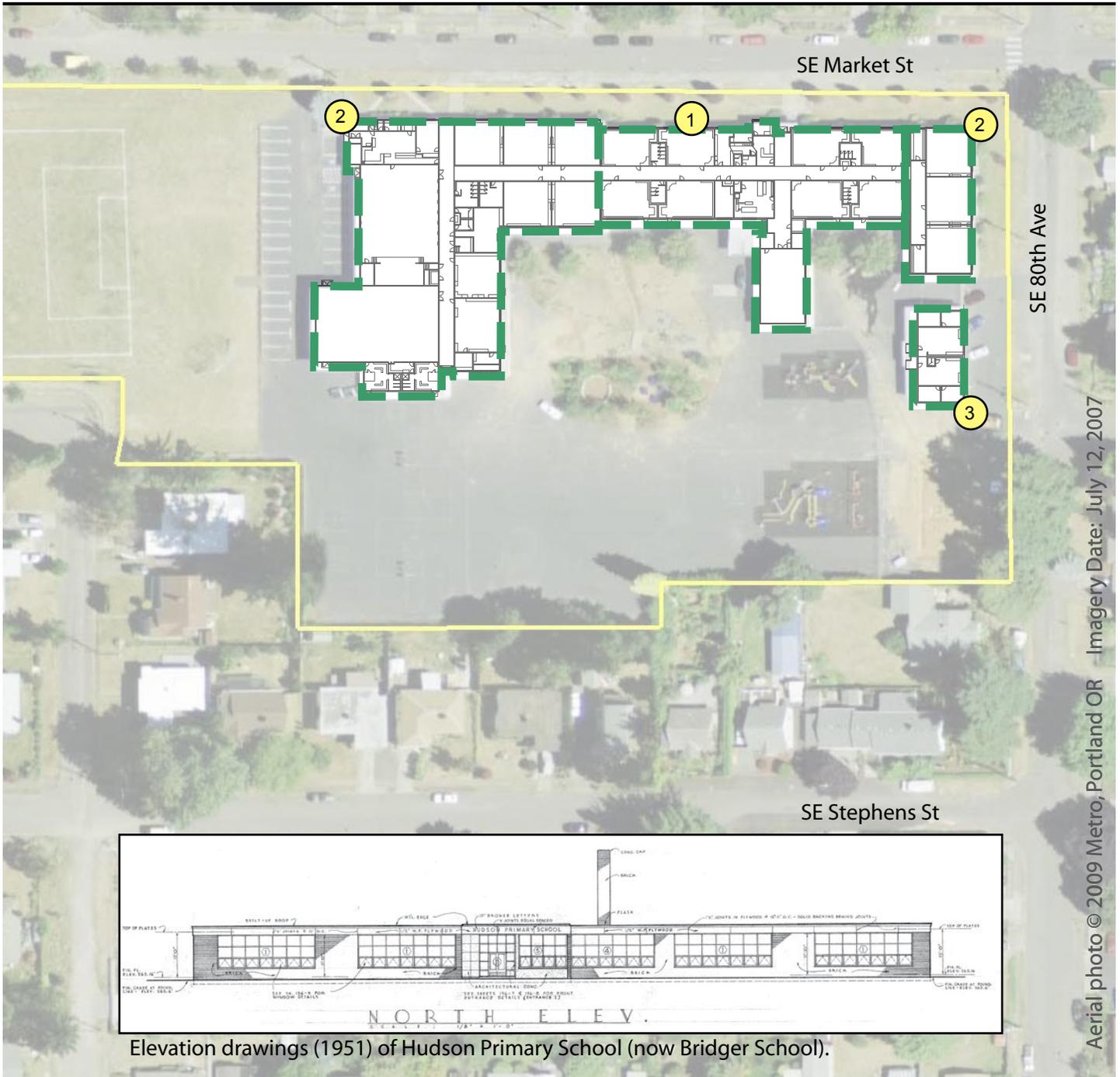


1959 West Addition (238A), cafeteria, looking southwest.

# Bridger School

7910 SE Market St, Portland OR, 97215

[View Site in Google Maps](#)



Elevation drawings (1951) of Hudson Primary School (now Bridger School).

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



## Historical Significance and Building Integrity

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

## Building Periods

1. Main Building (238A), 1951
2. Main Bldg Add (238A), 1959
3. Addition (238P1), 1966

