

# Oregon Historic Site Form

Da Vinci Arts School  
2508 Everett St  
Portland, Multnomah County

## LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME

address: 2508 NE Everett St  apprx. addr

Portland  vcnty Multnomah County

Optional Information  
assoc addresses:  
(former addresses, intersections, etc.)

location descr:  
(remote sites)

historic name: Da Vinci Arts School

current/  
other names: da Vinci Arts Middle School, Girl's Polytechnic High School; James Monroe High School

block nbr: \_\_\_\_\_ lot nbr: \_\_\_\_\_ tax lot nbr: \_\_\_\_\_

township: \_\_\_\_\_ range: \_\_\_\_\_ section: \_\_\_\_\_ 1/4: \_\_\_\_\_

zip: \_\_\_\_\_

## PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS

resource type: Building height (# stories): 3

elig. evaluation: eligible/significant

primary constr date: 1928 (c.)  secondary date: \_\_\_\_\_ (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)

total # eligible resources: 2 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: Jones, George

builder: \_\_\_\_\_

comments/notes: HRI Rank II.

## GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS

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

farmstead/cluster name: \_\_\_\_\_ external site #: 365  
(ID# used in city/agency database)

### SHPO INFO FOR THIS PROPERTY

NR date listed: \_\_\_\_\_

ILS survey date: 7/23/2009

RLS survey date: 7/23/2009

Gen File date: \_\_\_\_\_

**106 Project(s)**

SHPO Case #	Date	Agency Effect Eval
	8/6/2002	No Effect



## ARCHITECTURAL / PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

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

### Description Summary

The Girl's Polytechnic High School (now known as da Vinci Arts Middle School) is a two story reinforced concrete structure with brick cladding designed in the Classical Revival style. The building is covered by a flat roof. The campus consists of a T-shaped building (365A) and four portable classroom buildings. Constructed in 1927, the school exhibits extensive use of cast-stone ornamentation to express its Classical Revival style. The school features one and two-story projecting bays, as well as single and paired six-over-six double hung wood sash windows that are arranged symmetrically. The middle bay of the front façade, trimmed with recessed cast-stone balustrades and decorative panels, extrudes slightly from the rest of the building. The main portal protrudes off its face and is accented with Tuscan columns and a portico topped by an entablature. These classical elements, in addition to the building's symmetrical plan and fenestration, serve to reinforce the ideals of order, balance, and formality.

### Architectural Description

Da Vinci Arts School is located in the Kerns neighborhood of northeast Portland at 2508 NE Everett. The neighborhood consists of a mix of single family residences, multi-story apartments, and commercial and industrial buildings built primarily between 1920 and 1950 (Sanborn Maps 1924-1928; Sanborn Map updated to 1950). The da Vinci Arts campus occupies two-and-one-half city blocks and part of the NE 26th Avenue right-of-way. The school is located on the northwest end of the campus and play areas and open space are on the southwest and east end of the campus. Parking is provided along the west (side) and south (rear) elevations of the school building. Four portable buildings are located to the south of the primary building (365 P1-5).

The 1927 da Vinci Arts School has a T-shaped plan. The top of the T is oriented on an east-west axis along NE Everett Street. The main corridor, accessed via short entry halls, is located within this space; rectangular classrooms and administrative offices comprise all of the spaces located along this corridor. An auditorium and gymnasium, sited back to front, are located within the central wing (or bottom) of the T. Short corridors extend along the side of the auditorium to the gymnasium entrances.

The Classical Revival building is two stories with a daylight basement. The reinforced concrete structure is clad in brick laid in a running bond pattern. The building features a series of flat roofs with stone coping along the parapet. The brick walls are interrupted by a series of projecting horizontal elements that include cast-stone cornices and belt-courses. Single and paired six-over-six double hung wood sash windows provide the fenestration. The building rests on a poured concrete foundation.

The most important expression of the building's Classical Revival style lies on the north (front) elevation of the building. To emphasize the importance of the primary (north) elevation, a central bay extrudes slightly off the face of the building and features a recessed cast-stone balustrade and decorative panels with floral and scroll motifs. The main portal protrudes off the central bay and is accented with Tuscan columns and a portico with entablature and balustrade. The frieze of the entablature bears the school's name. Above the recessed portal is a large fanlight.

Auxiliary entrances, located along the ends of the primary (north) elevation, are located on one-story bays. These entrances, while less ornate, feature Tuscan columns, full entablatures, and transoms. Above the cornice of the entablature is a decorative scroll-like motif. All of the entrances along the primary elevation feature stone staircases and balustrades. Other character defining features include decorative brickwork along both ends of the primary (north) elevation.

The principal entrances located along the primary (north) elevations open into stairwells that are illuminated by windows that cap the entry doors. The corridors, classrooms, and staircases retain their original wood trim and molding. Ceilings throughout the building have been reconstructed with drop panels to provide for suspended tubular lighting fixtures. Wood doors with a center or rectangular light provide access to the classrooms. Flooring consists of concrete, linoleum tiles, and carpet. The building is heated by boilers located in the basement.

The classrooms feature a rectangular plan with a recessed area for closet and cupboard space. Some of the classrooms retain their original built-ins. Classrooms are heated through console systems located beneath windows and along corridors.

The Da Vinci campus also includes four portable buildings located to the south (rear) of the primary building and arranged from east to west. Portable 1 (365P1) is square in shape, clad in metal siding and features aluminum slider windows. The exact date of this building is unknown; it does not appear on early campus plans and may have been constructed in association with Kerns School, which was located to the east of the da Vinci campus until it was demolished in the 1970s. Portable 2 (365P2) was moved to the Da Vinci campus from Ball Elementary School in 2006. The building is rectangular in shape, clad in T-1-11 siding, and features aluminum slider windows. Portable 3 (classroom 109), which dates to 1918, is located along the east elevation of the central wing that forms the T-shape. This building is rectangular in shape, clad in lap siding, and features multi-pane wood sash windows. The upper half of the windows are obscured by plastic sheets. Portable 4 (365P5), which also dates in 1918, is located to the southwest of the primary building. The portable is formed by two gable roof buildings sited side by side; the building is clad in lap and plywood siding and features multi-pane wood sash windows. Portable 4 is connected to the primary structure by a covered walkway.

Portable 3 (classroom 109) and Portable 4 (365P5) are associated with the history of the site. The other buildings (365P1 and 365P2) are not associated with the early development of the da Vinci campus and therefore are non-contributing (non-significant) resources.

### Alterations/ Integrity

Da Vinci Arts School has undergone minor alterations since its construction. Alterations were made to the home economics room (1957, 1964), the library (1961), and the training kitchen (1960). Rooms 100 and 101 were reconfigured into a biology lab in 1974 and the biology lab was divided in 1983. Other alterations include the replacement of ceiling tiles, lighting fixtures (1954, 1993), and the replacement of the original flooring (1975,

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1989, 1990, 1993). In 1989 the building was remodeled, which included the addition and removal of partition walls in some of the administrative and classroom spaces (Da Vinci Facility Plan, Da Vinci Facility Profile).

Two of the four portable buildings (classroom 109 and 365P5) are associated with the history of the da Vinci campus. These portables have undergone interior alterations. Alterations to classroom 109 include the addition of partition walls to form a conference room, carpeting over the original floors, and the covering over of windows on the exterior by panels and on the interior by acoustic tiles (1989). The original windows are still in place. Building 365P5 has undergone minor interior alterations, which include the replacement of ceiling tiles, lighting fixtures, and flooring (Da Vinci Facility Plan, Da Vinci Facility Profile). The two portable buildings have retained their integrity of design, materials, and feeling to convey their historic association with the development of the Da Vinci Arts campus. They are moderately significant (contributing) resources.

## HISTORY

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

### Statement of Significance

The 1927 da Vinci Arts 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 classroom capacity and existing schools could not effectively serve areas of the city with new residential development (Cubberley 1915: 283-285, 288-290). Da Vinci Arts Middle School, originally named Girls' Polytechnic High School, was constructed to replace the Polytechnic School for Girls. The history of the Polytechnic School for Girls dates back to 1909. In 1909, the Atkinson School, located at NW 11th Avenue and Davis Street, operated as a trade school for both girls and boys. In 1914 Atkinson was segregated, and the girls trade school was named Benson Polytechnic School. In 1917, the name was changed to the Girls Trade School and in 1918 it became the Girl's Polytechnic High School (Oregonian 8-19-1928).

Portland Public Schools (PPS) District Architect George Jones designed the da Vinci Arts Middle School. George Jones was one of the most influential district architects. Jones designed a large majority of the schools built between 1908 and 1932. Beginning in 1908, with the emergence of the Bureau of Properties, PPS district architects took on a more formalized role in the design and maintenance of school facilities. The Bureau of Properties was created by PPS to centralize management of the district's properties (Powers and Corning 1937: 182).

For da Vinci Arts Middle School, George Jones adopted the building program and principles that dominated the discourse for school design during the first half of the twentieth century. 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). Many of Portland's new fire proof buildings, such as da Vinci Arts Middle School, were constructed of brick and concrete. The school is similar in plan to the two-story U, I, and T-shaped schools that were constructed with a lateral corridor connected to the front entrance by one or more short hallways.

During the late 19th century, educators nationwide began to promote the idea of industrial education alongside a more traditional one that prepared high school students for college. While manual education classes were developed within the city's public school system beginning in the early 1900s, the Girls' Polytechnic High School was one the city's first purpose-built manual training high schools. PPS buildings constructed during this period contained more differentiated and specialized space (Powers and Corning 1937: 182); however, da Vinci reflected even more specialization. The building contained twenty-one special rooms, eight classrooms, an auditorium, a gymnasium, a cafeteria, and a kitchen (Oregonian 8-19-1928). One of the special rooms included a "practice apartment" in which girls engaged in cooking, sewing, homemaking, and were taught the "graceful art of presiding in their own homes (Oregonian 1-21-1931). Da Vinci was one of several schools in the country equipped with a practice apartment (Oregonian 1-21-1931).

In 1927, the contract to build the new Girls' Polytechnic school totaled \$317,982. H.E. Doering, who constructed other Portland public school buildings including Boise-Eliot Elementary, received the general contract in the amount of \$258,534. The plumbing contract went to J.F. Shea for \$13,415; heating and ventilating work to Williams & Gibson for \$33,223; electrical work to W.H. Emrick for \$9,657; kitchen equipment to Piper Sheet Metal Works for \$3,152 (Oregonian 11-27-1927).

The da Vinci Arts 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 classical details such as cornices, pilasters, columns, quoins, and round-arch or square multi-paned windows, is well suited to portray 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).

The Girls' Polytechnic High School operated as a trade school for girls until the 1960s. In January 1968, the school was renamed the James Monroe High School. The change in name was the first step in recognizing the comprehensive nature of the school; courses had slowly shifted away from specialized training. In addition, boys were enrolled on a part time basis at the school. The change in name was the first step towards opening the high school to boys in all classes (Oregon Journal 12-13-1967). Alterations to some of the more specialized interior spaces, such as the practice apartment, occurred in the 1960s and reflect a shift in educational philosophy.

Da Vinci Arts Middle School retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association with its plan and exterior and interior finishes. The 1927 Classical Revival school is recommended as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) for its association with progressive era public school, particularly trade school, construction in Portland (Criterion A). The school was one of Portland's first purpose-built manual training high schools. The building embodies the educational philosophy of the period that encouraged a good secondary education while also offering a practical course of study. It is therefore eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A. Da Vinci Arts Middle School is also eligible for the NRHP under Criterion C because it is a good institutional example of the Classical Revival style of architecture, characterized by its symmetry, projecting central bay with cast-stone ornamentation, and porticos.

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## 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.

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

Oregonian. "Three New Schools Ready for Opening." 8-19-1928.

Oregonian. "City School Sketchbook." 1-21-1931.

Oregonian. "Contractors Rated by Gift to Chest." 11-27-1927.

Oregon Journal. "Polytechnic High Renamed." 12-13-1967.

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.

\_\_\_\_\_. Monroe-Davinci Elementary Plan.

\_\_\_\_\_. Monroe-Davinci Elementary 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 (365A), north (front) elevation, looking south.



Main building (365A) and Portable (365P5), south (rear) elevation, looking north.



Main building (365A), east (side) elevation, looking west.



Portable (365P5), east (side) and north (front) elevations, looking southwest.



Main building (365A), south (rear) elevation at boiler room, looking northwest.



Main building (365A), first floor hallway, looking east.



Main building (365A), library, looking west.



Main building (365A), basement cafeteria, looking southeast.



Portable (CLR 109), music room, looking southeast.

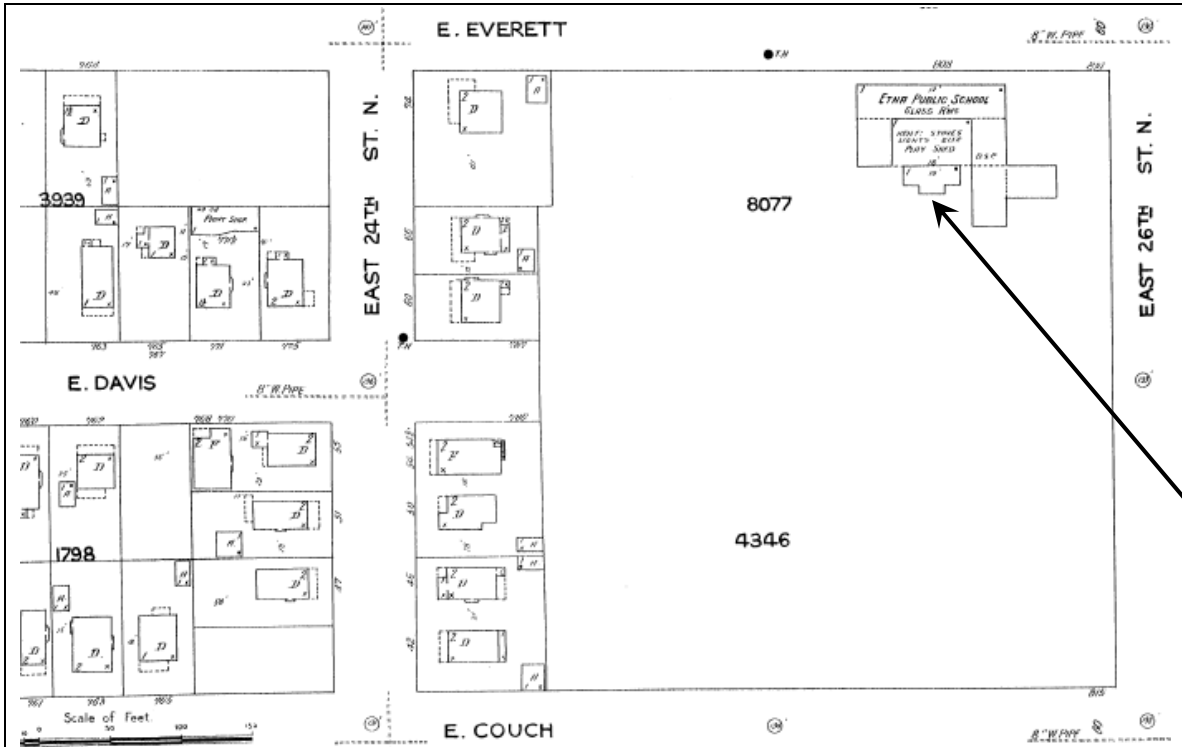


Main building (365A), auditorium, looking east.



**ENTRIX**

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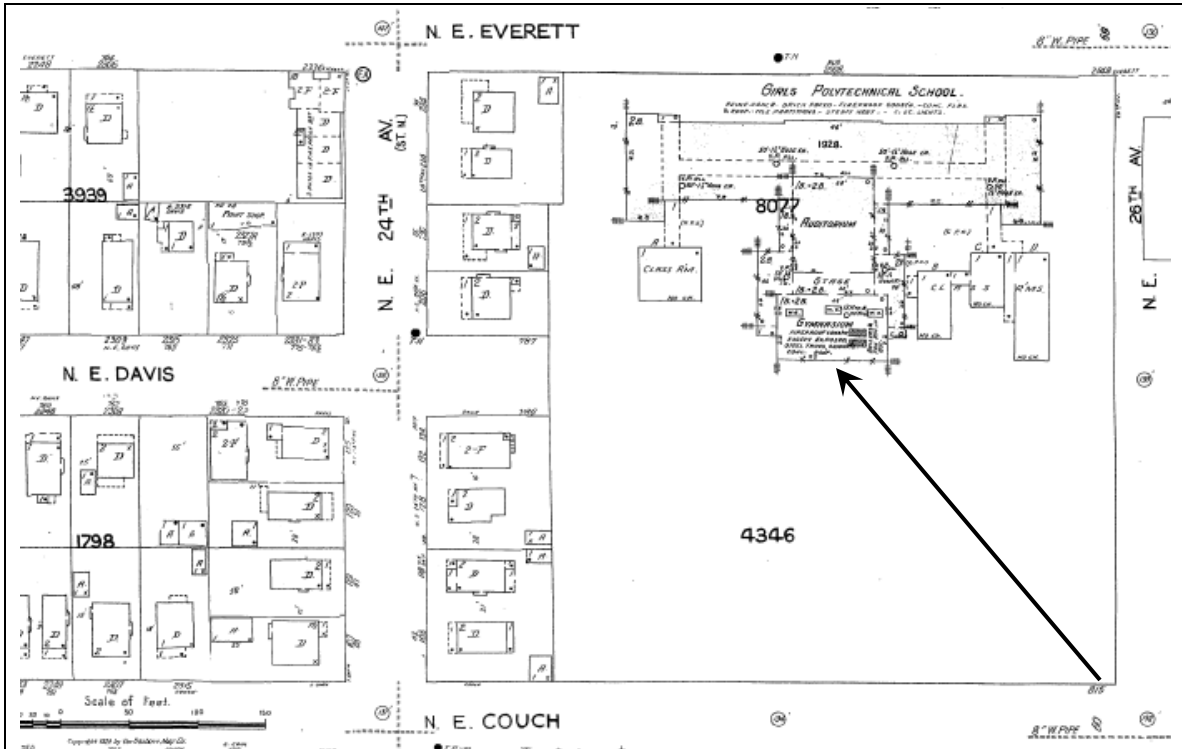


1924-1928, Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Portland, Oregon, Map 981. Arrow points to future location of Girls Polytechnical School (now daVinci), previously the location of Etna Public School.



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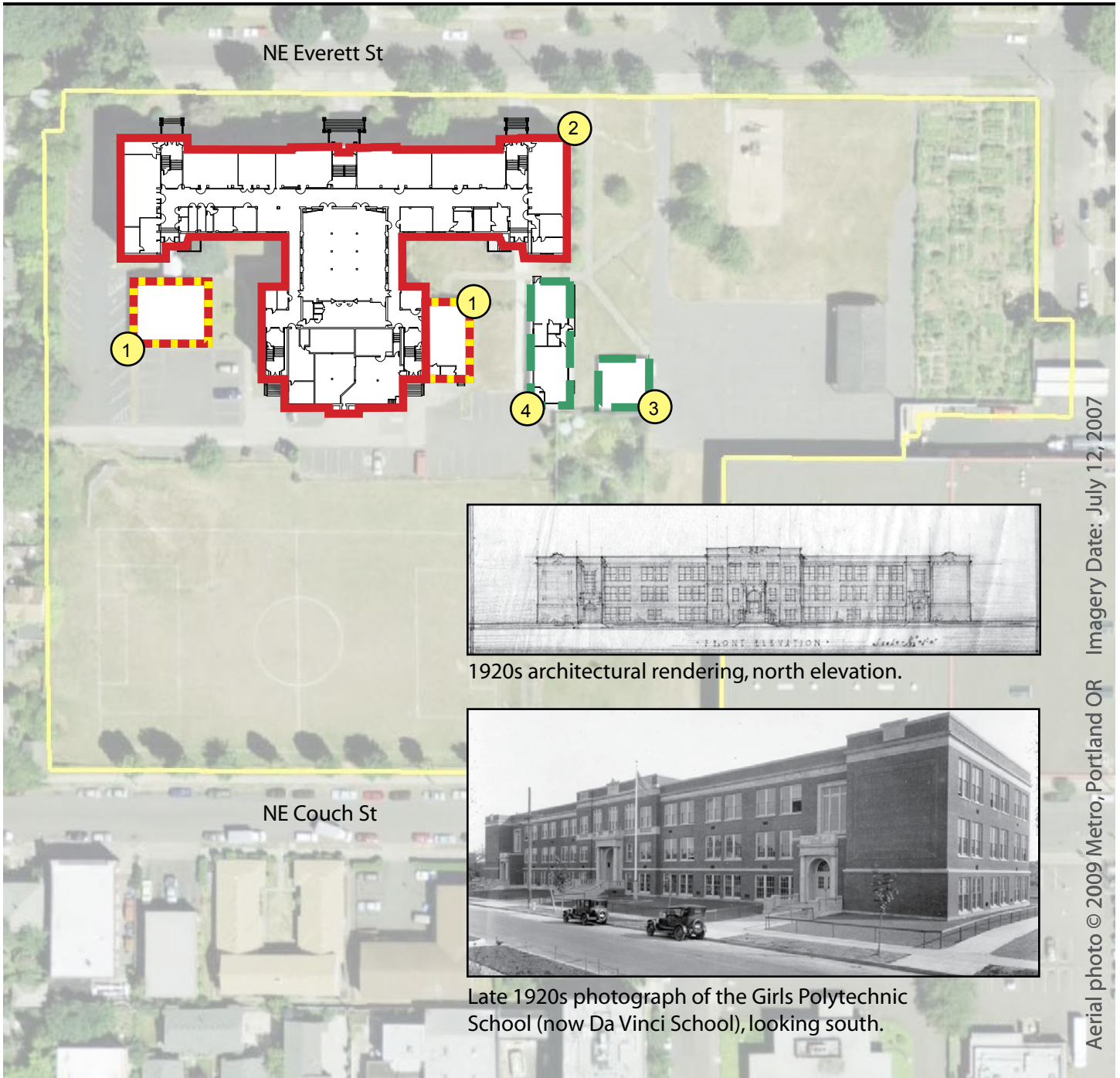
Updated to 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Portland, Oregon, Map 698.  
Arrow points to Girls Polytechnical School (da Vinci).



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2508 NE Everett St, Portland OR, 97232

[View Site in Google Maps](#)

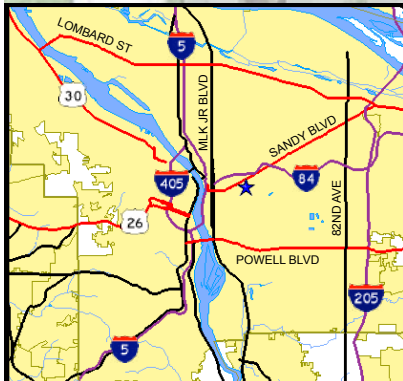


1920s architectural rendering, north elevation.






Late 1920s photograph of the Girls Polytechnic School (now Da Vinci School), looking south.

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. Portables (365P), 1918
2. Main Building (365A), 1928
3. Portable Addition (365P), n.d.
4. Portable Addition (365P), 2006