

Oregon Historic Site Form

James John School
7439 Charleston Ave
Portland, Multnomah County

LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME

address: <u>7439 N Charleston Ave</u> <input type="checkbox"/> apprx. addr <u>Portland</u> <input type="checkbox"/> vcnty <u>Multnomah County</u>	historic name: <u>James John School</u> current/ other names: <u>James John Elementary School, Richard Williams 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>2</u> elig. evaluation: <u>eligible/contributing</u> primary constr date: <u>1929</u> (c.) <input type="checkbox"/> secondary date: _____ (c.) <input type="checkbox"/> (optional--use for major addns) primary orig use: <u>School</u> secondary orig use: _____ primary style: <u>Classical Revival: other</u> secondary style: _____ primary siding: <u>Standard Brick</u> secondary siding: <u>Cast Stone</u> plan type: <u>School (General)</u> comments/notes: <u>HRI Rank III.</u>	total # eligible resources: <u>1</u> total # ineligible resources: <u>2</u> NR status: _____ (indiv listed only; see Grouping for hist dist) NR date listed: _____ orig use comments: _____ prim style comments: _____ sec style comments: _____ siding comments: _____ architect: <u>Jones, George H.</u> builder: <u>George Jackson</u>
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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 #: 166
(ID# used in city/agency database)

SHPO INFO FOR THIS PROPERTY

NR date listed: _____
 ILS survey date: 8/4/2009
 RLS survey date: 8/4/2009
 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

James John School is a two story reinforced concrete building with brick veneer. The campus consists of a U-shaped building (166A), a portable (166B), and a play shed (166C). Constructed in 1929, the school exhibits extensive use of cast-stone ornamentation to express its Classical Revival style. The school features a central projecting bay and bay windows. Symmetrically arranged aluminum windows provide the fenestration. The middle bay of the front façade projects slightly from the rest of the building. The bay is trimmed with a dentil cornice, cast-stone quoins, and a decorative panel bearing the school's name. The main portals, located at the sides of the bay, are 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

James John School is located in the St. Johns neighborhood of North Portland at 7439 N. Charleston. The neighborhood consists of a mixture of single family residences, multi-story apartments, and commercial buildings built primarily between 1920 and 1950 (Sanborn Maps 1924-1928; Sanborn Map updated to 1950). The James John Elementary School campus occupies three city blocks and the vacated Kellogg Street/John Street right-of-way; the school is located on the northeast end of the campus and play areas and open space are on the south and west ends of the campus. A 1944 portable building (166B) and 1978 play shed (166C) are located to the west of the primary building.

The two-story Classical Revival building is constructed of reinforced concrete. The red brick cladding is laid in a running bond pattern. The building features a series of flat roofs with a stone coping along the parapet. The brick walls are interrupted by a series of horizontal elements that include cast-stone cornices and aluminum windows. The building rests on a poured concrete foundation.

The most important expression of the building's Classical Revival style lies on the east (front) elevation of the building. To emphasize the importance of the primary (east) elevation, a central bay projects slightly from the face of the building and features a cast-stone dentiled cornice, decorative panel bearing the school's name, and quoins. Three arched windows with stone surrounds are located in the center of the bay. The main portals are located along the end of the front elevation and feature Tuscan columns and porticos topped by entablatures. The cornice of the entablature features dentils. Above the entablatures are balustrades. The recessed portals are marked by a fanlight.

The 1929 James John School is similar in plan to the U-shaped schools that were constructed during this period. The base of the U is oriented on a north-axis along N. Charleston Avenue. Like other PPS schools, the building features a central projecting bay and a gymnasium located off the rear of the central wing and between the wings that form the U. Within the interior of the central projecting bay is the school auditorium. In addition, two short corridors extend off the north and south wings to rear classrooms and the cafeteria. Rectangular classrooms and administrative offices comprise the other spaces located along the U-shaped corridor.

Other character defining features include decorative brickwork along both ends of the primary (east) elevation. In addition, the north (side) elevation and west (rear) elevation feature bay windows.

The principal entrances, which are located along the (east) elevation, 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. Entry hallways feature their original wooden bulletin boards that bear the initials of the school. Ceilings throughout the building have been reconstructed with acoustic panels and suspended tubular lighting fixtures. Wood doors with 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. Classrooms and other spaces are heated through console systems located beneath windows and along corridors.

The classrooms feature a rectangular plan with a recessed area for closet and cupboard space. Some of the classrooms retain their original built-ins.

The James John campus also includes one portable building and a play shed located to the west of the primary building. The 1944 portable (166B) is rectangular in shape with a central corridor on the interior. Exterior features include T-1-11 sliding and fixed awning windows. The 1978 play shed (166C) is rectangular in shape and features wooden posts, a truss system, and a built-up roof.

Alterations/ Integrity

James John School has undergone minor alterations since its construction. In 1956 the original play room was adapted into the cafeteria. To provide for this new use a kitchen and staff lunch room were constructed along the rear (west) elevation of the building. In addition, doorways were added to the side elevations of the new cafeteria. In 1987, the original home economics room and the manual training room were adapted into a library. During these remodels many of the original finishes and features were removed. Other alterations include the replacement of ceiling tiles, lighting fixtures, original flooring and some of the classroom built-ins (James John Facility Plan, James John Facility Profile).

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

Constructed in 1929, James John School was part of the last wave of an extensive building program begun by Portland Public Schools in the early 1900s. Gradually influenced by John Dewey's Progressive Education Movement, the program 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 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).

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).

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. Two of the most influential district architects during this period included Floyd Naramore and George Jones who designed a majority of the schools from 1908 to 1932.

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 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 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).

The architect of James John School, George Jones, was well versed in the design of school facilities through his role as Superintendent of Building for the district. The son of Thomas J. Jones, who had also served as district architect for many years, George Jones was born in Portland in 1887. After attending Oregon State College for two years, George Jones obtained a degree in architecture in 1913. Jones worked in New York for several years before serving in the U.S. Army Combat Engineers during World War I. Following his return to Portland in 1920, Jones obtained his architecture license. He quickly assumed the position of school architect after his predecessor Floyd A. Naramore became district architect for the Seattle School District.

In his role as district architect, George Jones designed about 25 new schools and supervised the construction of additions for many existing building. Following his tenure with Portland Public Schools, Jones went into private practice in Portland. With architect Harold Marsh, he established the firm of Jones & Marsh. Throughout his career Jones continued to specialize in school design, with projects in Pendleton, Klamath Falls and Oregon City. The firm of Jones & Marsh also designed additions to Roosevelt High School in Portland, buildings at Concordia Academy, and the Engineering wing and coliseum at Oregon State College in Corvallis (Ritz 2003: 217).

In 1894, the St. John's School District #2 acquired land for \$1,000 and built a school originally known as Center School. Completed that same year, the four room building was built for \$4,013.00. Between 1896 and 1904, the building was expanded to include 4 rooms and a manual training building, and the name of the school was changed to Central St. James (PPS Chronology Binder). This was annexed to PPS in 1915.

By the early 1920s, PPS was planning for the construction of a new facility. The board announced in October of 1921 that it would award the construction work to George Jackson based on the low bid of \$189,106.00, and the heating work was awarded to Dauch Heating & Engineering for \$48,000.00. The entire cost for construction including fixtures was estimated at \$352,300.00 (Oregonian 10-06-1921). In 1926 the district acquired additional land for \$7,000.00 (Portland Chronology Binder). Despite the early planning, the final authorization to construct the school was not given by the board until November of 1927 (Oregonian 11-08-1927). Although the Oregonian referred to the proposed school as James John as early as 1921, the district also considered the property as Richard Williams School. The name James John was officially adopted once the building was completed in 1929 (Portland Chronology Binder; Oregonian 10-06-1921; Oregonian 11-08-1927).

James John School retains integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association with its plan and exterior and interior finishes. The 1929 Classical Revival school is recommended as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) for its association with progressive era public schools, particularly trade schools, and is a strong example of the principles that characterized the design of schools during this era (Criterion A). While the school features elements of the Classical Revival style, its ornamentation is not as sophisticated as other Portland schools designed by George Jones. James John is therefore not 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 | |

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7439 Charleston Ave
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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. "James John School will cost \$262,723." 10-06-1921.

Oregonian. "Contractors rated by gifts to chest." 11-08-1927.

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

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

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

Portland Public Schools. Schools Chronology Binder. PPS Archives, Portland, OR.

_____. James John Elementary Facility Plan PPS Archives.

_____. James John Elementary Facility Profile. PPS Archives.

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).



East (front) elevation, looking west.



North (side) elevation, looking west.



North side of east (front) elevation,
looking west.



West (rear) elevation at cafeteria, looking
southeast.



South (side) and west (rear) elevations,
looking northeast.

**James John School
Exterior Photos
ENTRIX, 2009**



First floor entrance



Auditorium



Cafeteria



Conservatory in original nature study room

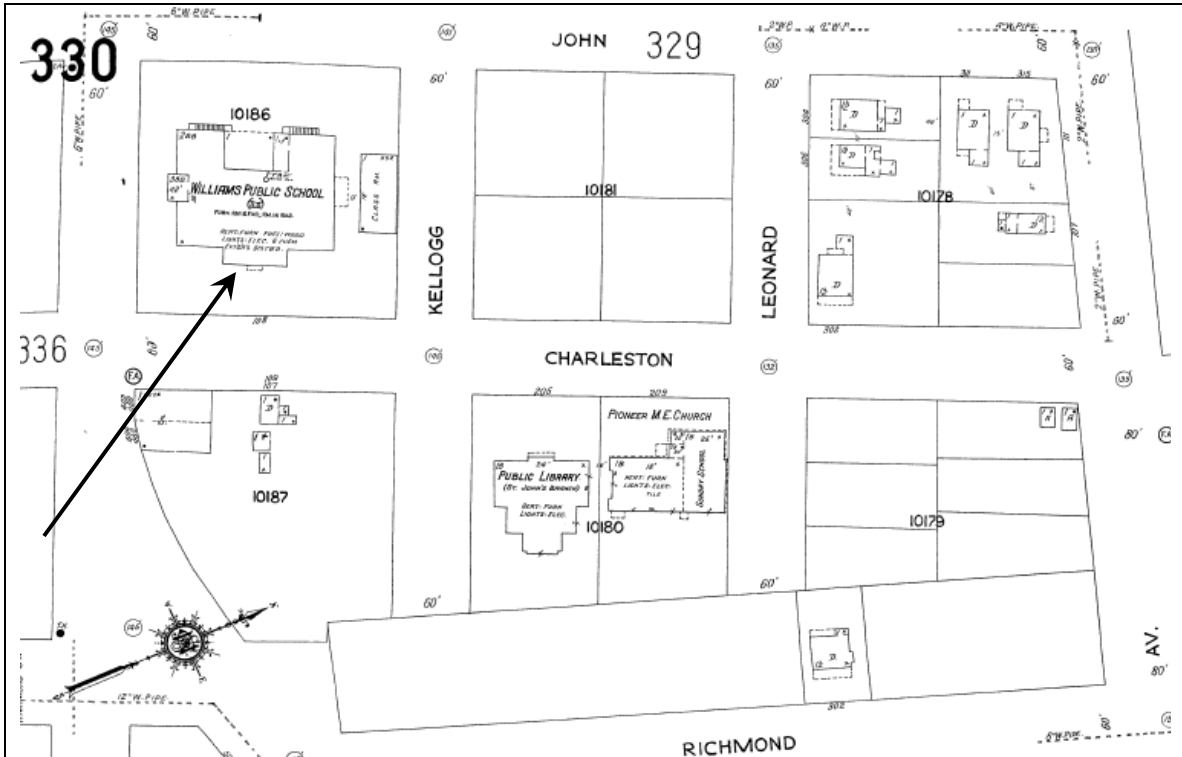


Gymnasium



ENTRIX

Down to Earth. Down to Business.™

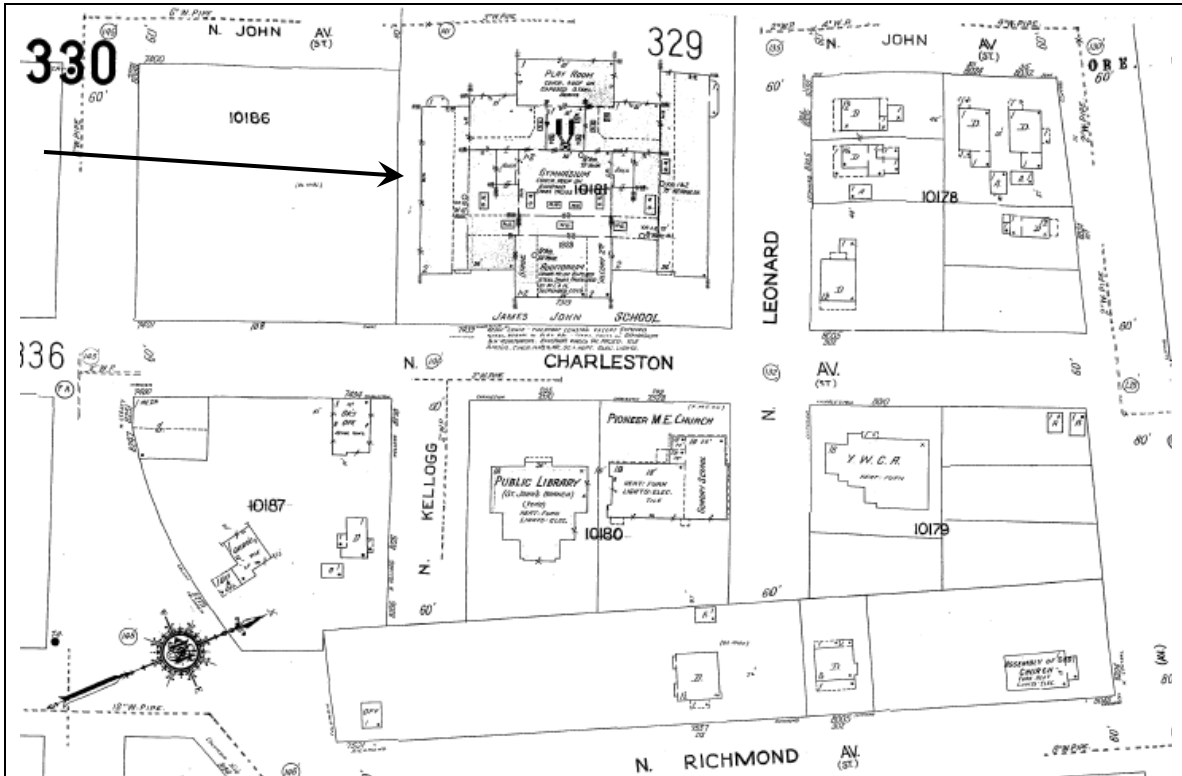


1924-1928, Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Portland, Oregon, Map 330. Arrow points to the future location of James John School.



ENTRIX

Down to Earth. Down to Business.™

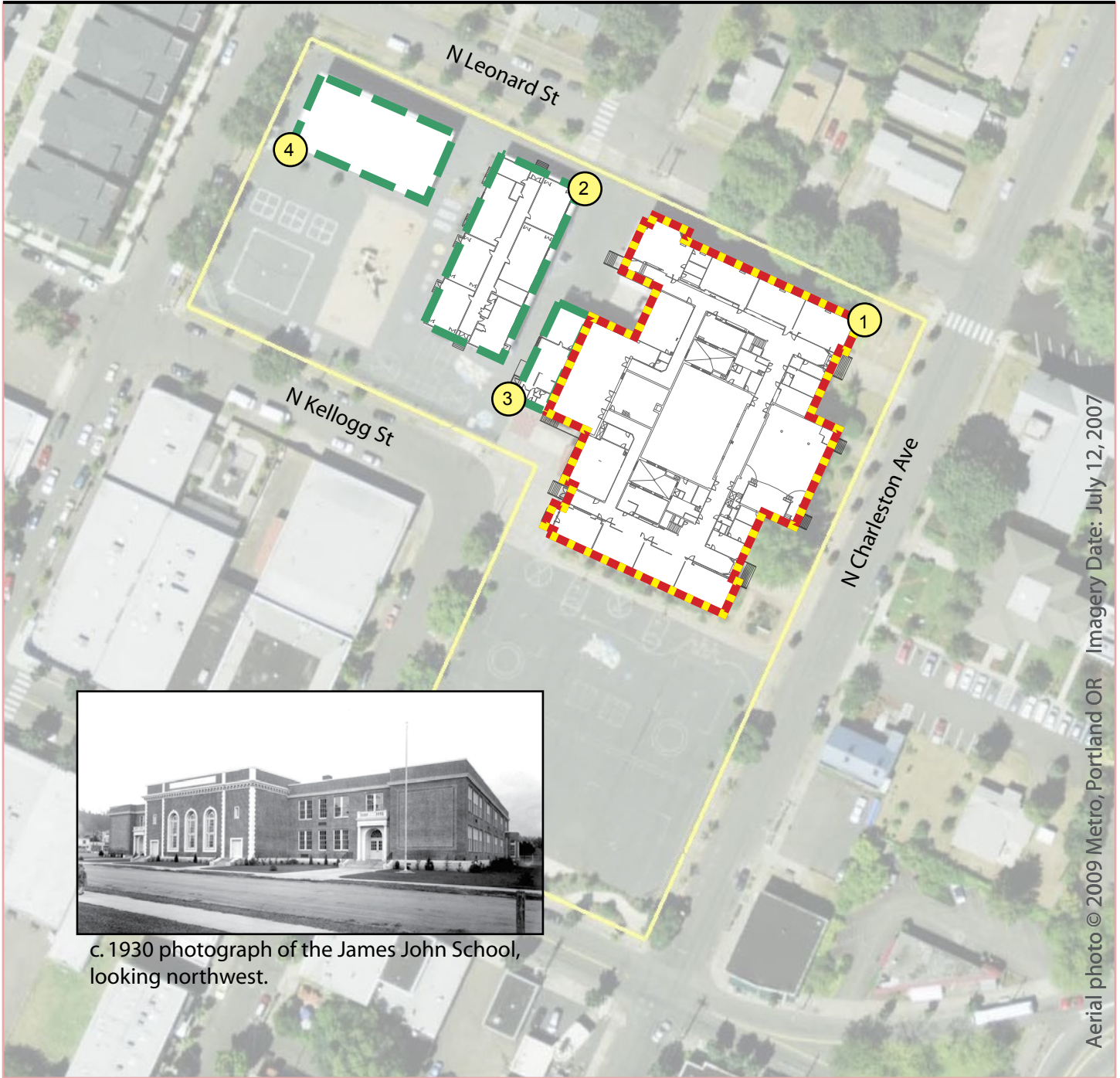


Updated to 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Portland, Oregon, Map 330. Arrow points to James John School. Note vacating of the street, school location change, and removal of older school building.

James John School

7439 N Charleston Ave, Portland OR, 97203

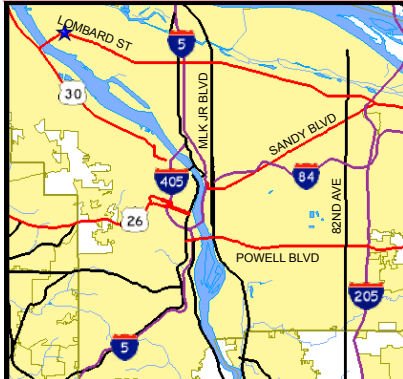
[View Site in Google Maps](#)






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



c. 1930 photograph of the James John School, looking northwest.



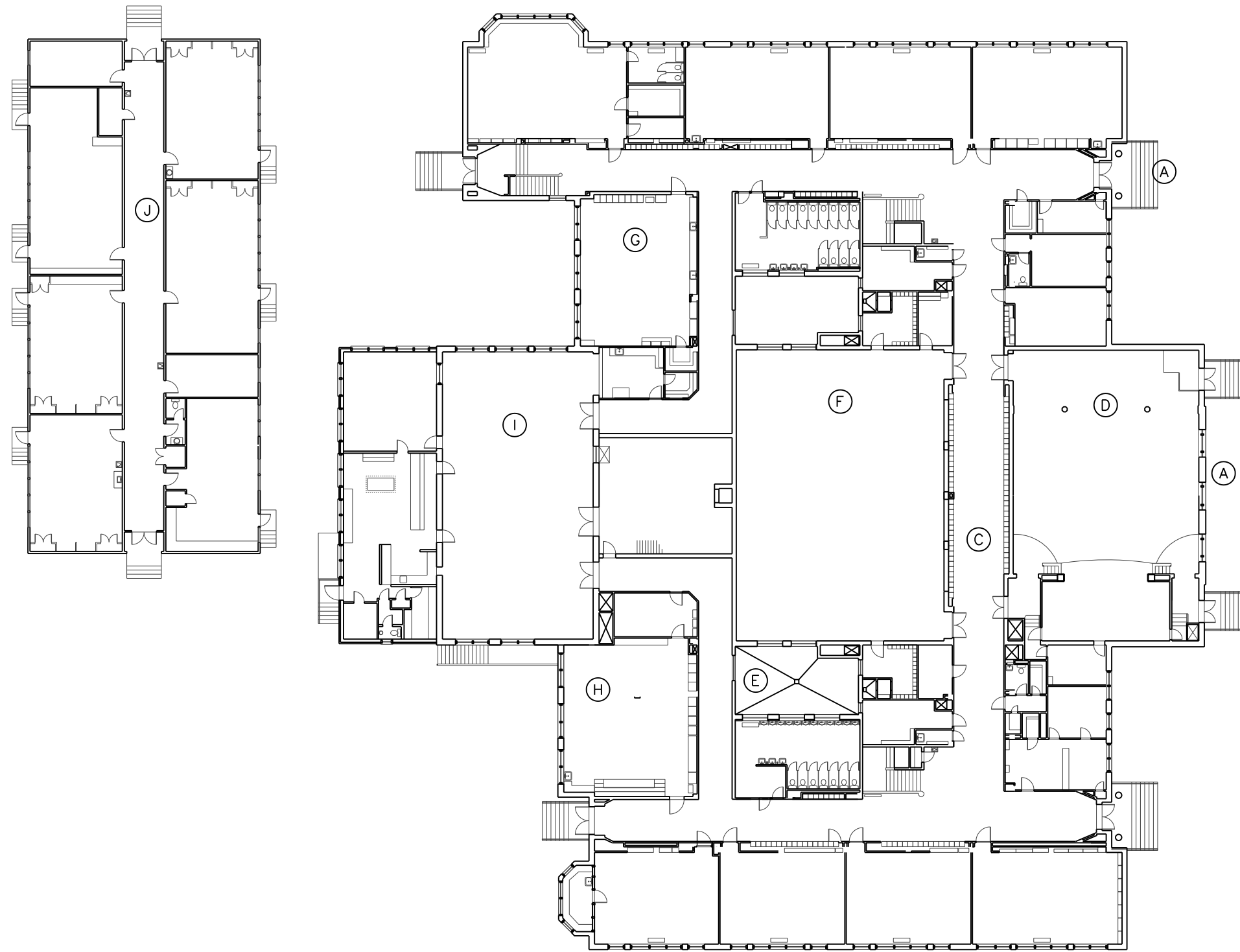
Historical Significance and Building Integrity

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



Building Periods

1. Original Building (166A), 1929
2. Building (166B), 1943/44
3. Addition (166A), 1956
4. Building (166C), 1978



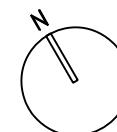
KEYNOTES:

- (A) THE PRIMARY 1929 TWO-STORY BUILDING IS ORNAMENTED BY A SERIES OF HORIZONTAL ELEMENTS THAT INCLUDE CAST STONE CORNICES, CONCRETE WATER TABLES, AND BANDS OF ALUMINUM WINDOWS.
- (B) THE FRONT ELEVATION IS MARKED BY A PROJECTING CENTRAL BAY THAT IS ORNAMENTED WITH A DENTIL CORNICE, CAST-STONE QUAINS, AND A DECORATIVE PANEL BEARING THE SCHOOL'S NAME. THE PRIMARY ENTRANCES FLANK THE CENTRAL BAY AND ARE ACCENTED WITH TUSCAN COLUMNS AND AN ENTABLATURE. THE CORNICE OF THE ENTABLATURE IS LINED WITH DENTILS AND TOPPED WITH A BALUSTRADE.
- (C) THE PLAN IS ROUGHLY U-SHAPED WITH A GYMNASIUM PROJECTING OFF THE REAR OF THE CENTRAL WING AND BETWEEN THE WINGS THAT FORM THE U. THE BUILDING DEVIATES FROM A TYPICAL U-SHAPED PLAN IN THAT A SINGLE-STORY BUILDING IS LOCATED BETWEEN THE WINGS OF THE U.
- (D) ON THE INTERIOR OF THE CENTRAL BAY IS THE SCHOOL'S AUDITORIUM, WHICH FEATURES A COFFERED CEILING, WOOD MOLDING, AND WAINSCOTING. THE WOODEN SEAT ENDS ARE ORIGINAL TO THE BUILDING.
- (E) LIGHT WELLS PROVIDE DAYLIGHT TO THE REAR CORRIDORS AND GYMNASIUM.
- (F) THE GYMNASIUM FEATURES AN EXPOSED TRUSS SYSTEM, SKYLIGHTS, CLEARSTORY WINDOWS, AND WINDOWS ALONG THE WEST AND SOUTH (SIDE) WALLS THAT FORM THE LIGHT WELLS.
- (G) THIS ROOM WAS ORIGINALLY THE HOME ECONOMICS CLASSROOM WITH BUILT-IN CABINETS AND A KITCHEN EXTENDING OFF THE SOUTH ELEVATION; THE KITCHEN WAS REMOVED AND THE CLASSROOM WAS REMODELED INTO A MUSIC ROOM IN 1987.
- (H) THIS ROOM WAS ORIGINALLY THE MANUAL TRAINING ROOM; IT WAS REMODELED INTO A LIBRARY IN 1987.
- (I) THE CAFETERIA, WHICH FEATURES EXPOSED BRICK WALLS, WAS ORIGINALLY A PLAY ROOM; IT WAS REMODELED INTO A CAFETERIA IN 1956. A KITCHEN WAS CONSTRUCTED OFF THE WEST (REAR) ELEVATION IN THE SAME YEAR.
- (J) THIS 1943 PORTABLE BUILDING HAS RETAINED MANY OF ITS ORIGINAL FEATURES, WHICH INCLUDES WOOD FLOORS, DOORS, AND CLASSROOM BUILT-INS.

GENERAL NOTES:

- (1) THE EXTERIOR WALLS ARE CLAD IN BRICK ARRANGED IN A RUNNING BOND PATTERN AND FEATURE DECORATIVE BRICK WORK ALONG THE ENDS OF THE EAST (FRONT) ELEVATION.
- (2) THE BUILDING FEATURES A FLAT ROOF WITH STONE COPING ALONG THE PARAPET.
- (3) THE CLASSROOMS FEATURE A RECTANGULAR PLAN WITH A RECESSED AREA FOR CUPBOARDS, SHELVES, AND CLOSETS.
- (4) THE ORIGINAL DOUBLE HUNG WOOD SASH WINDOWS HAVE BEEN REPLACED.
- (5) ALTERATIONS INCLUDE THE REPLACEMENT OF THE ORIGINAL BUILDING FLOOR TILES, INTERIOR DOORS, CEILING TILES, LIGHTING FIXTURES, AND SOME OF THE CLASSROOM BUILT-INS.

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



JAMES JOHN ELEMENTARY – 166

7439 N CHARLESTON AVE 97203

PPS HISTORIC ASSESSMENT



DRAWING: ANNOTATED PLAN

DATE: Sept. 4, 2009