

Oregon Historic Site Form

Laurelhurst School
840 41st Ave
Portland, Multnomah County

LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME

address: 840 NE 41st Ave apprx. addr

Portland vcnty Multnomah County

Optional Information
 assoc addresses:
 (former addresses, intersections, etc.)
 location descr:
 (remote sites)

historic name: Laurelhurst School

current/
 other names: Laurelhurst Elementary School

block nbr: _____ lot nbr: _____ tax lot nbr: _____
 township: _____ range: _____ section: _____ 1/4: _____
 zip: _____

PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS

resource type: Building height (# stories): 2

elig. evaluation: not eligible/non-contributing

primary constr date: 1923 (c.) secondary date: _____ (c.)
 (optional--use for major addns)

primary orig use: School

secondary orig use: _____

primary style: Colonial Revival

secondary style: _____

primary siding: Brick:Other/Undefined

secondary siding: Terra Cotta: Other/Undefined

plan type: School (General)

total # eligible resources: _____ 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: Claussen & Claussen

builder: _____

comments/notes: **The property contains two resources: the main building (265A) is not eligible and the classroom annex (265B) and attached portables (265P1) are not eligible. The property is listed as having an HRI Rank III.**

GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS

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

farmstead/cluster name: _____ external site #: 265
 (ID# used in city/agency database)

SHPO INFO FOR THIS PROPERTY

NR date listed: _____

ILS survey date: 7/7/2009

RLS survey date: 7/7/2009

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 the Laurelhurst neighborhood of east Portland, the 1923 Laurelhurst Elementary School consists of a two-story, reinforced concrete with brick veneer building and a single story wood structure constructed in 1951 and added onto in 1968. Laurelhurst Elementary School is ornamented with quoins, decorative brickwork, and terra cotta belt courses and geometric details. Other details include a central entrance pavilion with terra cotta cartouche and entry surround. Bands of aluminum windows and arched multi-light windows with terra-cotta keystones provide the primary fenestration. The building is capped by a flat roof with a terra cotta capped parapet. Double loaded corridors provide access to the administrative offices, classrooms, and recreation spaces.

Architectural Description

Laurelhurst Elementary School is situated in the Laurelhurst neighborhood of east Portland at 840 NE 41st Street. The neighborhood consists of a mix of single family residences built primarily between 1910 and 1950 (Sanborn Maps 1924-1928, Sanborn Map updated to 1950). The primary entrances to the school are from NE 41st Street. Play areas and open space occupy the eastern end of the campus. Located to the northeast of the primary building (265A) is a 1951 single story annex (265B) with flat roof and wood shingle and brick veneer siding. A two room portable (265P1) with flat roof and plywood walls was added to the east end of the annex in 1968.

Laurelhurst Elementary School has a U-shaped plan with gymnasiums (boy's and girl's sides) situated between the wings that form the 'U' shape. The school deviates slightly from the symmetrical U-shaped plan as the auditorium is positioned off the south end of the central wing. The front elevation is marked by a projecting bay and a triangular parapet. Rectangular classrooms and administrative offices comprise the other spaces located along the U-shaped corridor.

The two-story Laurelhurst Elementary School is ornamented with brick quoins, decorative brickwork, and terra cotta belt courses. The detailing does not pinpoint a particular stylistic inspiration, but the modesty of their execution suggests the Colonial Revival style. Other details include a central entrance pavilion with terra cotta cartouche and entry surround. While less ornate, other entrances are marked by terra cotta entablatures and fixed multi-light windows. Bands of aluminum windows provide the primary fenestration, however the auditorium features an arcade-like series of arched multi-light windows with terra-cotta keystones. The building is capped by a flat roof with a parapet capped in terra cotta and rests on a poured concrete foundation.

The principal entrances located along the west (front) elevation opens into an illuminated lobby. Other entrances open into stairwells or other public spaces, such as the auditorium, that are illuminated by windows that cap the entry doors. The double loaded corridors are lined with wood pilasters and molding. Tubular fluorescent light fixtures are suspended from the acoustic tile clad ceiling. Wood doors with center lights provide access to the classrooms. Flooring consists of asphalt tiles, linoleum tiles, and carpet. The classrooms feature a rectangular plan with a recessed area that features shelves, cupboards, and closets. Classroom windows line the exterior walls and retain their wood surrounds.

The building is heated by boilers located behind the gymnasium on the east side of the building. Grilles set beneath the windows provide heat for the classrooms and other spaces.

Alterations/ Integrity

The primary two-story building was constructed in phases between 1923 and 1925. A small brick addition was added to the side of the boiler room along the east (rear) elevation in 1969. Interior alterations to the primary building include the remodeling of the boys gymnasium into a media center and science lab, the boys locker room into storage space, the east end of the auditorium into kitchen and storage space (1971), the reconfiguration of second floor classrooms (1974), and the reconfiguration of office space (1974). Other alterations include the replacement of floor tiles (1982-86), windows (1990), doors (1991), light fixtures, and some of the built-ins.

A wood clad annex, located to the northeast of the main building, was constructed in 1951. A portable building was added to the east (rear) elevation of the annex in 1968. While these buildings have a high degree of integrity, they are not associated with the 1923-1925 development of the Laurelhurst Elementary School. These buildings are non-contributing resources.

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 between 1923 and 1925, Laurelhurst Elementary 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). As early as 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).

The architectural firm, Clausen and Clausen, designed Laurelhurst Elementary School. Originally from Chicago, brothers H. Fred Claussen and William E. Claussen moved to Portland in 1908 where they opened their architecture firm. The firm was responsible for numerous prominent buildings in Portland, including the Roosevelt Hotel, the Old Heathman Hotel, the Alderway Building and the Loyalty Building. The firm, known for its attention to detail, closed in 1950 (Ritz 2003).

For Laurelhurst Elementary School, Clausen and Clausen 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). By 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). Many of Portland's new fire proof buildings, such as Laurelhurst, were constructed of brick and concrete. The school is similar in plan to the two-story U-shaped schools that were constructed with a lateral corridor connected to the front entrance by one or more short hallways. Laurelhurst, however, deviates from the standard U-shaped plan in that the boy's and girl's gymnasiums were located between the wings that formed the 'U' shape. Like other PPS buildings constructed during this period, Laurelhurst was constructed in units (sometimes referred to as extensible schools) and contained more differentiated and increasingly specialized space (Powers and Corning 1937: 182). The school included two gymnasiums (girls and boys), an auditorium, and manual training room (Sanborn Map updated to 1950).

Laurelhurst Elementary School was constructed in the Colonial Revival style that was popular for educational buildings during the first half of the twentieth-century. This style was characterized by symmetry and classical detailing such as cornices, pilasters, round-arch multi-paned windows with overall compositions that alluded Colonial period antecedents. 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).

In the 1950s, the elementary school-age population of Portland increased again thus necessitating an expansion program for Laurelhurst Elementary School. A single-story annex (265B) with shingle siding and brick veneer, which provided space for four additional classrooms, was constructed in 1951. A portable building (265P1), providing space for two classrooms, was added along the east end of the annex in 1968.

Laurelhurst Elementary School is associated with a noteworthy architect and a good example of public school planning during the Progressive Era. The school is neither an exemplar of the Colonial Revival style nor does it retain a level of historical integrity commensurate with other Portland Elementary Schools constructed during the same period and is therefore not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Interior alterations to significant interior spaces (mainly the boy's gymnasium and second floor classrooms) have altered character defining features of the 1923-1925 building. Due to the loss of integrity, Laurelhurst Elementary School is not eligible under National Register of Historic Places Criteria 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

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.

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.
_____. Laurelhurst Elementary School. Facility Profile.

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_____. Laurelhurst Elementary School. Building Plans.

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 (265A), west (front) elevation, looking eastward.



Main building (265A), south (side) elevation, looking eastward.



Main building (265A), north (side) elevation, looking southeast.



Annex (265B), west and south elevations, looking eastward.



Main building (265A), east (rear) elevation, looking west.



Main building (265A), main entrance lobby, looking west.



Main building (265A), media center (former boys gymnasium) with exposed truss system, looking west.



Main building (265A), auditorium, looking west.



Main building (265A), second floor hallway, looking east.

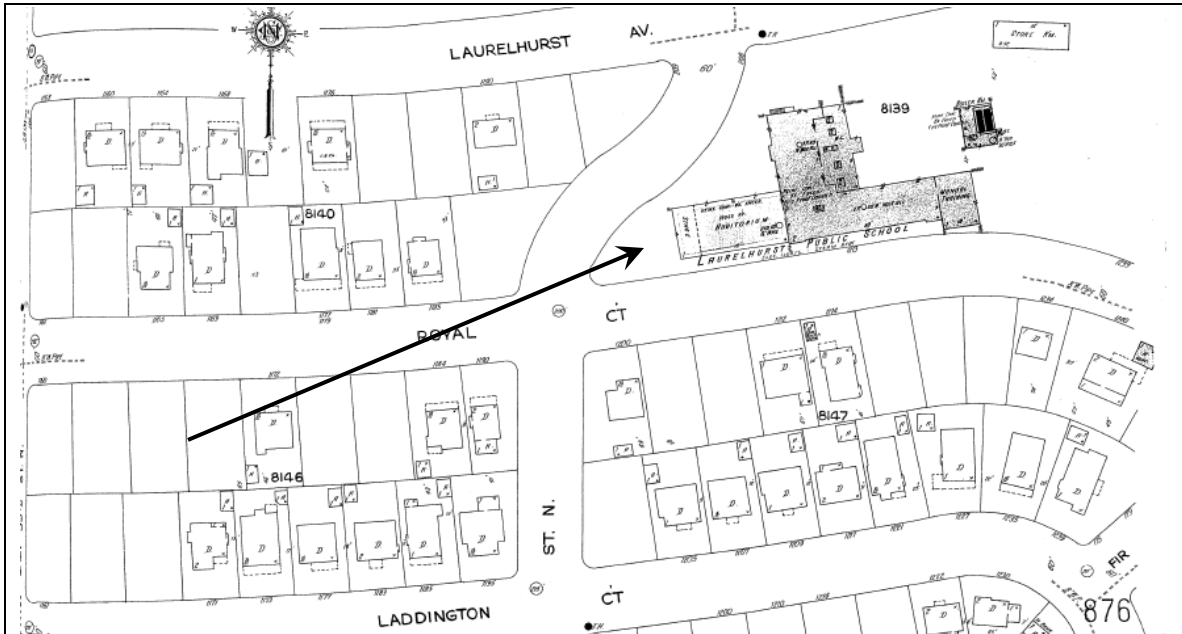


Main building (265A), gymnasium, looking west.



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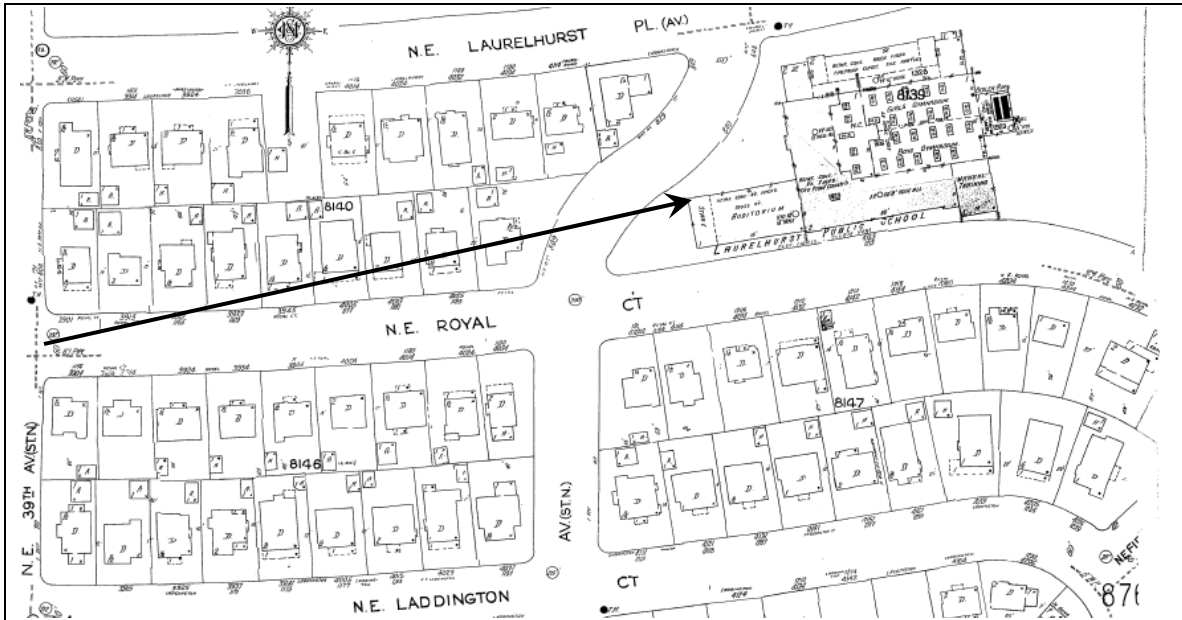


1924-1928, Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Portland, Oregon, Map 875. Arrow points to Laurelhurst Public School.



ENTRIX

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Updated to 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Portland, Oregon, Map 875.
Arrow points to Laurelhurst Public School.

Laurelhurst School

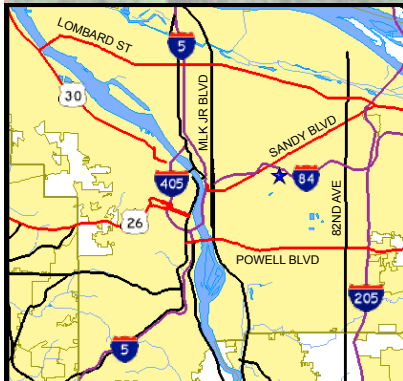
840 NE 41st Ave, Portland OR, 97232

[View Site in Google Maps](#)






2009 photograph of the front entrance to the Laurelhurst 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. Original Building (265A), 1923
2. Second Unit (265A), 1925
3. Classroom Addition (265B), 1951
4. Portable Classrooms (265P), 1968
5. Incinerator Added (265A), 1969