

# Oregon Historic Site Form

Mount Tabor School  
5800 Ash St  
Portland, Multnomah County

## LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME

address: 5800 SE Ash St  apprx. addr

historic name: Mount Tabor School

Portland  vcnty Multnomah County

current/  
other names: Mount Tabor Middle 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): 1

total # eligible resources: 0 total # ineligible resources: 1

elig. evaluation: not eligible/non-contributing

NR status: \_\_\_\_\_

primary constr date: 1952 (c.)  secondary date: 1958 (c.)   
(optional--use for major addns)

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

primary orig use: School

orig use comments: \_\_\_\_\_

secondary orig use: \_\_\_\_\_

primary style: International

prim style comments: \_\_\_\_\_

secondary style: \_\_\_\_\_

sec style comments: \_\_\_\_\_

primary siding: Standard Brick

siding comments: \_\_\_\_\_

secondary siding: \_\_\_\_\_

plan type: School (General)

architect: Stanton, Glenn

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

comments/notes:

## GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS

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

farmstead/cluster name:

external site #: 176  
(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)**



North (front) elevation

## ARCHITECTURAL / PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

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

### Description Summary

The Mount Tabor Middle School (originally Mount Tabor School) is a one story brick veneer building designed in the International style. The campus consists of the 1952 Mount Tabor Middle School, which features a modified L-shaped plan, and a series of additions have been added to the south elevation of the building. These additions have enclosed the original L-shaped plan and formed a central courtyard. The building features a linear composition and asymmetrical plan. These International style elements, in addition to bands of aluminum windows, low sloped roofs, overhangs, and lack of ornamentation serve to reinforce the ideals of functionalism and minimalism.

Mount Tabor Middle School has been extensively modified over time to meet the evolving needs of the Portland Public Schools. The original L-shaped building was constructed in 1952. The building was expanded five times since its original construction. Additions (1958, 1968, 1976, 1987, and 1991) were constructed along the south and east elevations of the main facility.

### Architectural Description

The Mount Tabor Middle School (originally Mount Tabor School) is situated in the Center neighborhood of East Portland at 5800 SE Ash Street. The neighborhood consists of a mix of commercial and single and multi family residences built primarily between 1920 and 1950 (Sanborn Maps 1924-1928, Sanborn Map updated to 1950). The Mount Tabor campus occupies a rectangular shaped parcel that is bound on the north by SE Ash, on the east by SE 60th Avenue, on the south by residential buildings, and on the east by SE 57th Avenue. The school is located on the west end of the campus and play fields are located on the east side of the campus. Parking is provided to the south and playgrounds are to the southeast of the facility.

The 1952 Mount Tabor Middle School featured a modified L-shaped finger plan; however, the building has been modified extensively filling in the L shape. The central spine of the L shaped building is oriented on an east-west axis that runs parallel to SE Ash. The gymnasium, media center and classrooms are located along the main east-west corridor. Along the west wing of the building, which is sited on a north-south axis, are the auditorium, administrative offices, and additional classrooms. A series of additions (1958, 1968, 1976, 1987 and 19991) have been added to the south elevation of the building, which has enclosed the original L-shaped plan and formed a central courtyard that is surrounded on all sides. These additions provided space for new uses such as a multipurpose room and music, science, industrial arts, home economics classrooms. Doorways located along the eastern north-south oriented corridor provide access to the courtyard.

The single story International style wood frame building is clad in red brick. The building features a linear composition, which is achieved through a series of single story buildings. The two story gymnasium is the only vertical element; however this building is visible primarily from the south (rear) elevation. The horizontal massing of the building is emphasized by the low sloped gable roofs with wide eaves and bands of windows. Fixed and hopper aluminum sash windows provide the fenestration. Louvered vents are located along the gable ends. All of the buildings that comprise the Mt Tabor campus rest on concrete foundations.

The primary entrance, which is located along the north (front) elevation, is recessed within the walls of the building. The entrance is marked by a wall of fixed aluminum sash windows and two metal doors with center lights. Secondary entrances, some of which are recessed into the walls of the building, feature metal doors with center lights.

The principal entrance opens into a small foyer, which is lighted by the windows surrounding the entrance. Stairs links the foyer to the junction of the north and west corridors. Along the main east-west corridor are rectangular classrooms, the gymnasium, and locker rooms. The gymnasium features exposed brick walls with wood base boards and glass block windows along the south wall. A drop ceiling covers the upper portion of the windows. Along the north-south corridor are the media center, auditorium, and administrative offices. The media center features exposed brick along one wall and a sloping ceiling supported by large posts. The auditorium features brick walls, rounded ribs, and a stage with vertical boards around it. Openings have been added along the west wall of the auditorium to provide for additional dining space.

The double-loaded corridor features vinyl tile wainscot with metal cap, smooth plaster walls, and a rubber base. The corners of the walls are rounded. Tubular fluorescent light fixtures are suspended from the acoustic tile clad ceiling in the older (1952) section of the building and are suspended from decking in the newer sections of the building. Flooring consists of vinyl asphalt tile and carpet. Classrooms are rectangular in plan and feature a recessed cupboard and closet area along one wall. The rooms feature smooth plaster walls with a rubber base molding. Classroom doors are wood hollow core with center lights. The building is heated by boilers that are located at the end of the west wing. Metal heating units are located in the hallways and consult units are located beneath classroom windows.

### Alterations/Integrity

Mount Tabor Middle School has been extensively modified over time to meet the evolving needs of the Portland Public Schools. The original modified L-shaped building was constructed in 1952. In 1958, a small two room addition was added along the east wall of the west wing. Ten years later two large classrooms (science and industrial arts) were added off the east wall of the addition. In 1976, a three room addition was added to the south of the gymnasium. Additional classrooms were added to the south elevation of the west wing in 1987. In 1991, classrooms were again added to the south elevation of the main wing; however, this time the additions formed a central courtyard. A number of interior spaces have also been reconfigured. Classrooms along the northwest end of the building were reconfigured into the media center (1974), classrooms along the north and west corridors were reconfigured into office space (1987), and openings were cut in the west wall of the auditorium to create additional dining space (1991). The library was further remodeled in 1980. Other alterations include the replacement of floor tiles (1982, 1988), ceiling tiles (1984), and exterior doors (1988) (PPS Facility Profile and Plans). These alterations have affected the design, materials, workmanship and feeling associated with the 1952 Mount Tabor Middle School.

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## HISTORY

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

### Statement of Significance

Built in 1952, the Mount Tabor Middle School (originally Mount Tabor 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 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 Rose City-Montavilla neighborhood, which borders the Center Neighborhood, showed a significant increase in 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. The 1952 Mount Tabor School was constructed at the site of the 1910 Mount Tabor School, which was demolished in 1955, for a total cost of \$638,140 (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 Architects Collective – led by Walter Gropius, and Perkins Will 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, and aluminum. In many buildings, architects achieved flexibility through the building's structure by employing non-load-bearing partitions 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 Mount Tabor Middle School, Glen Stanton, adopted the building program and principles that dominated the discourse for school design during the second half of the twentieth century. A native of Iowa, Glenn Stanton graduated from the University of Oregon and received his M.A. from Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Stanton worked with Portland architect Morris H. Whitehouse and eventually became a partner in the firm of Whitehouse, Stanton & Church. In 1935 Stanton opened his own firm, Glen Stanton and Associates. Stanton later entered into partnership with Hollis Johnston. The firm designed a number of notable structures such as building for the new Lewis & Clark College Campus and the Stadium Branch of the U.S. Nation Bank. Stanton was also known for supervising the restoration of the McLoughlin House (1846) in Oregon City, which was one of the early architectural preservation projects in the state (Ritz 2002: 368). Glenn Stanton designed at least two Portland public school buildings—Mount Tabor Middle School and Madison High.

The 1952 Mount Tabor Middle School depicted the finger plan type school that became popular during the post-war period. Similar to other schools of this type, Mount Tabor featured a single story modified L-shaped building with wings forming exterior courtyards. The construction of the facility, wood frame with brick veneer, allowed for economic building and ease of expansion. Utilization of mass produced materials now readily available due to the conversion of the defense industries to manufacturing facilities, including aluminum windows and glass block, provide economical decoration.

Mount Tabor Middle School has been expanded to accommodate the changing needs of East Portland residents. Additions were made to the building in 1958, 1968, 1976, 1987, and 1991. The 1976 building expansion program was undertaken to accommodate 7th and 8th grade students from Sunnyside and Sabin Schools. New additions, totaling \$300,000, were made for classrooms, a science center, and a new home economics room (Oregon Journal 9-08-1976). In 1979, the Mount Tabor School was turned into a middle school; previously the school had served Kindergarten through 8th grade students. The new Mount Tabor Middle School served grades 6 through 8th (Oregonian 3-28-1978).

While Mount Tabor Middle School is a notable historic building, it does not retain a level of historical integrity commensurate with other Portland Elementary and Middle Schools constructed during the same period and is therefore not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The additions and interior renovations have altered the plan and exterior and interior details of the original 1952 building. Due to the loss of integrity, Mount Tabor Middle School is not eligible under either NRHP 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

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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.

Oregonian. "Mt. Tabor Slated for Middle School Use." 3-28-1978.

Oregon Journal. "Mt. Tabor Expanding Facilities for New Students." 9-08-1976.

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.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Mount Tabor Middle School. Facility Profile*.

Ritz, Richard. E. *Architects of Oregon. A Biographical Dictionary of Architects Deceased – 19th and 20th Centuries*. Portland: Lair Hill Publishing, 2003.



Main building (176A), north (front) elevation looking south.



Main building (176A), south (rear) and east (side) elevations, looking north.



Main building (176A), west (side) elevation looking southeast.



Main building (176A), courtyard, looking southwest.



Main building (176A), south (rear) elevation, looking northeast.

**Mount Tabor Middle School  
Exterior Photos  
ENTRIX, 2009**





Main building (176A), media center, looking southeast.



Main building and 1991 Addition (176A), corridor along courtyard, looking south.



Main building (176A), library, looking southeast.



1991 Addition (176A), multipurpose room, looking northeast.

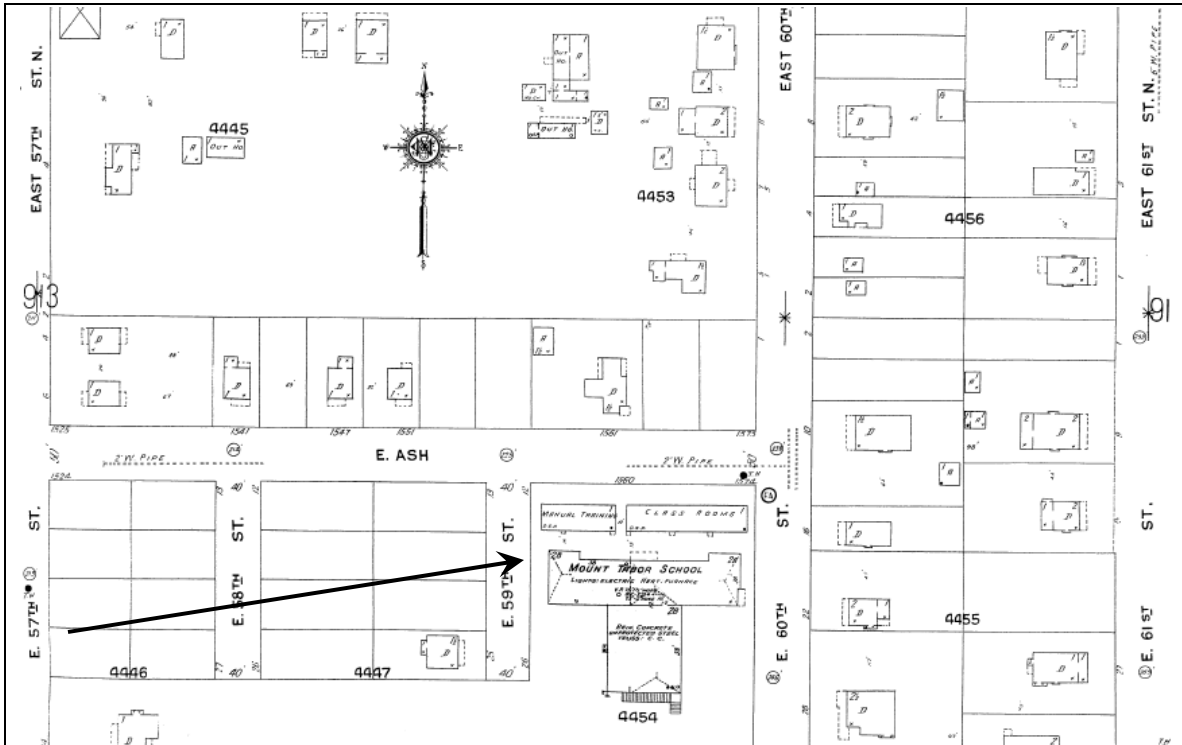


Main building (176A), auditorium, looking northwest.



# ENTRIX

Down to Earth. Down to Business.™

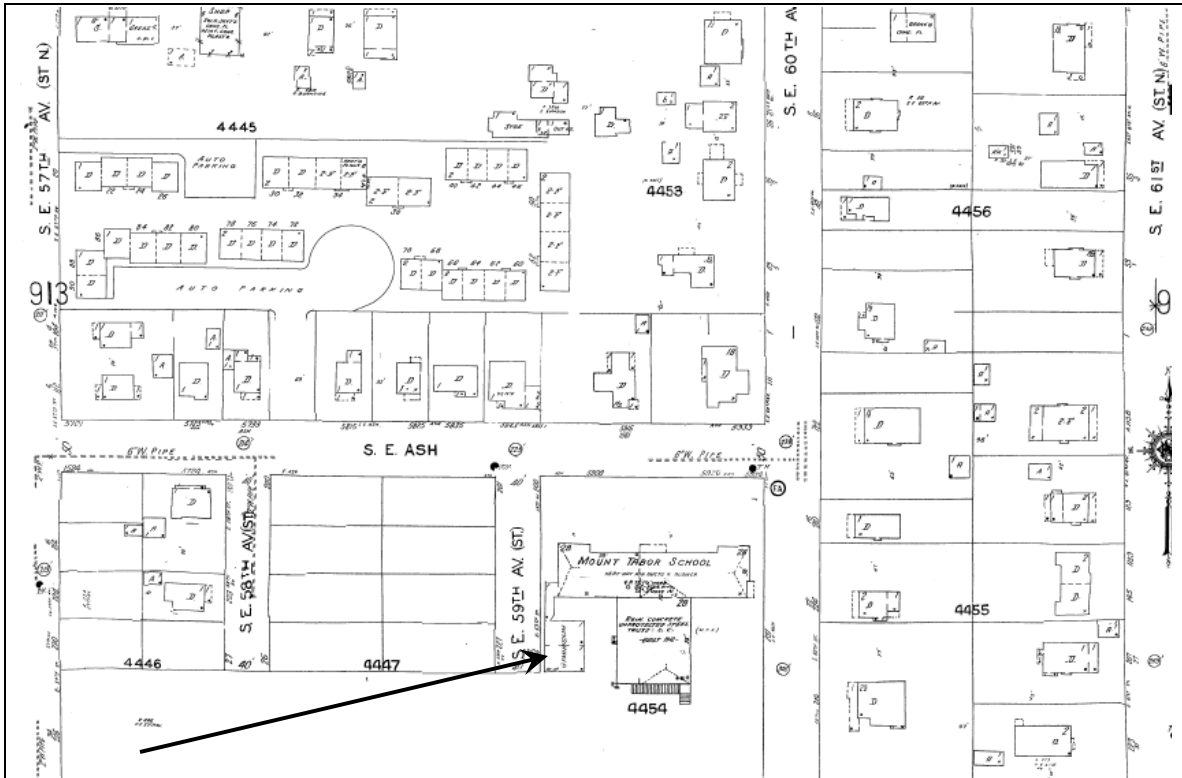


1924-1928, Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Portland, Oregon, Map 914. Arrow points to the future site of a newer Mount Tabor School constructed in 1952.



# ENTRIX

Down to Earth. Down to Business.™



Updated to 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Portland, Oregon, Map 914.  
Arrow points to the future site of the Mount Tabor School constructed in 1952.



# Mount Tabor School

5800 SE Ash St, Portland OR, 97215

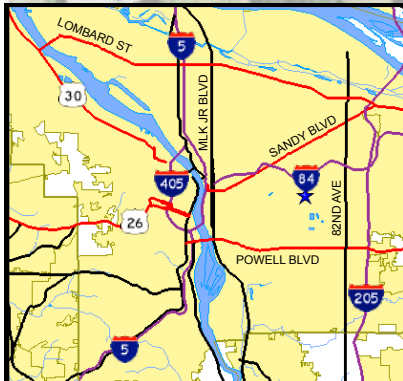
[View Site in Google Maps](#)






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



2009 photograph of the front entrance to the Mt Tabor School.



## Historical Significance and Building Integrity

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



0' 50' 100' 200'

## Building Periods

1. Original Building (176A), 1952
2. Classroom Add (176A), 1958
3. Classroom Add (176A), 1968
4. Classroom Add (176A), 1976
5. Classroom Add (176A), 1987
6. Classroom Add (176A), 1991