

Oregon Historic Site Form

Richmond School
2276 41st Ave
Portland, Multnomah County

LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME

address: 2276 SE 41st Ave apprx. addr

Portland vcnty Multnomah County

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

historic name: Richmond School

current/
 other names: Richmond Elementary School

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

PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS

resource type: Building height (# stories): 3

elig. evaluation: not eligible/non-contributing

primary constr date: 1908 (c.) secondary date: 1953 (c.)
 (optional--use for major addns)

primary orig use: School

secondary orig use: _____

primary style: Classical Revival: other

secondary style: _____

primary siding: Brick:Other/Undefined

secondary siding: _____

plan type: School (General)

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

NR status: _____
 NR date listed: _____ (indiv listed only; see Grouping for hist dist)

orig use comments: _____

prim style comments: Heavily altered, Originally Classical Revival - no details remain.

sec style comments: _____

siding comments: _____

architect: Jones, Thomas J.

builder: _____

comments/notes: 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 #: 275
 (ID# used in city/agency database)

SHPO INFO FOR THIS PROPERTY

NR date listed: _____

ILS survey date: 6/23/2009

RLS survey date: 6/23/2009

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 Richmond neighborhood of Southeast Portland, the Richmond School is located at 2276 SE 41st Avenue. The 3.83-acre campus includes a two-story school building with a basement. Built in 1908, the building originally featured Classical Revival detailing, but all of these architectural embellishments was covered by a subsequent veneer of yellow brick. The building retains its interconnecting hip and gable roofs. The building's irregular shaped plan includes classrooms, a multi-purpose room, a gymnasium, a library, and an administrative office.

Architectural Description

The Richmond School, which faces SE 41st Avenue, is situated on a grass-covered and asphalt campus with playgrounds and ball fields located to the south of the school. The primary entrance to the building is on SE 41st Avenue. The parking area occupies the north side of the building.

The two-story school building with a basement is oriented on a north-south axis. A yellow brick veneer provides cladding for the wood frame structure. The building is covered by interconnecting hip and gable roofs. The building sits on a concrete foundation. The one story brick north wing has a low pitched gable roof, added in 1953, which includes a multi-purpose room, faculty lounge, and kitchen. A one-story brick passageway with a flat roof connects the wing with the main building.

The fenestration consists primarily of symmetrically placed metal frame replacement windows with a horizontal sliding opening at the bottom of the window. Divided into three horizontal sections, the upper section of each window is blocked off with louvered vents. Metal frame windows have replaced the wood frame windows on the stairwell landings between the 1st and 2nd floors. Double leaf metal doors with side window panels have replaced the original wooden entry doors.

The interior layout of the school consists of a modified "H" shape hallway plan on both floors with the main hallway running north-south bisecting the E-W side hallways. Most of the sections of the single-loaded corridors retain their original configuration, height, and built-in metal lockers. On both floors the wood molding and framing has been painted, and contemporary fluorescent light fixtures have replaced the original lights. Sections of the acoustic tile ceilings have been lowered. The flooring consists of linoleum and concrete. Single leaf metal doors provide access to the classrooms from the hallways.

Except for the replacement of the 1st/2nd story landing windows, most of the stairwells retain their features including the original plaster veneer walls, wooden railings and molding, steam radiator and concrete steps and landings. However, the north stairwell between the ground floor entry and the 1st floor has been extensively modified. The landing on the 2nd floor has also been modified to add closet space on the 2nd floor. A single leaf metal door replaced the original double wooden door and windows.

The classrooms retain their original rectangular layout and ceiling height. The rooms either have recessed clean-up areas with sinks and counters, or separate large storage areas with clean-up facilities. The majority of classrooms still exhibit built-in cabinetry and closets for storing coats and supplies. The molding and framing have been painted. All the rooms have veneer plaster walls, tiled flooring and tubular fluorescent light fixtures suspended from the acoustic tile ceilings. Window transoms above the hallway doors provide additional light and ventilations to some of the classrooms.

The multi-purpose room serves as a combined auditorium, play area, and lunch room. Utilitarian finishes including cross-ceiling beams, fluorescent lights, and a tiled linoleum floor facilitate the use of the room as a gymnasium. The stage, located at the west side of the room, enables the space to be used for performances and assemblies. The room features cafeteria tables and benches that recess into the wall, although they are not currently used. The adjacent kitchen features a vintage wooden freezer door.

The school library was created by combining two classrooms located on the first floor in the northwest corner of the building. Typical of a library there are wooden bookcases, cabinetry, and tables.

The building is heated by steam boilers located in the basement behind the gymnasium. Grilles set in the wall provide heat and cool air to the hallways and classrooms. Cool air is pushed through the building's vents by compressor-powered fans.

Alterations/Integrity

Richmond School has evolved dramatically since the construction of the first unit in 1908. The initial 8 classroom building was expanded in 1913/14 (Portland Chronology Binder). The construction of the gymnasium in 1927 filled in the original I-shaped plan. In 1953, the wing housing the multipurpose room was added to the north side of the school. That same year, extensive changes were made to the hallways and classrooms. Acoustic tile was installed on the ceilings of the school in 1954. In 1965 and 1980 the library was remodeled. Between 1983-1984 many of the original wood frame, multi-light windows were replaced. Changes to the flooring occurred in 1986 and 1987. Many of the classrooms have been remodeled to support the conversion to new uses (Portland Facility Profile).

The Richmond School retains a low level of historical integrity. Although designed to be expanded in units, after the 1930s many of the alterations resulted in incompatible changes to the school. The 1953 addition resulted in a significant change to the staircase and corridor configuration on the north side of the school. The metal frame windows are incompatible with the building's historic design, features and materials. Since 1953 there have been numerous incompatible modifications to the corridor ceilings and finishes, lighting, and built-in cabinetry in the classrooms.

HISTORY

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

Statement of Significance

Constructed in 1908, Richmond School was one of the first schools constructed as part of a dramatic building program begun by Portland Public Schools in the early 1900s. Gradually influenced by John Dewey's Progressive Education Movement, the board 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 with new residential development (Cubberley 1915: 283-285, 288-290).

Richmond School was designed by early Portland architect Thomas J. Jones. Born in Wales around 1854, Jones came to Portland sometime before 1887. Jones was active in Portland civic life, having served on the Portland City Council. One of his most notable projects is the Captain Brown house, which was on the National Register until it was demolished. Jones is best known for his work as the architect to the Portland School Board. His most intensive design contributions occurred between 1907 and 1912 and included designing schools such as a two story addition to Woodlawn in 1910 (demolished), 1910 addition to Midway (Llewellyn, demolished), two units in 1907 for Arleta (demolished), 1906 Vernon School (demolished), 1909 Irvington (demolished), 1907-1910 Creston (demolished), 1912 addition to Woodmere (aka Weston, demolished), two units in 1911 for Mt. Tabor School (demolished), 1908 south wing for Sellwood School (demolished), and two units for the 1912 Holman (South Portland) School (demolished) (PPS Architectural Drawing Archives). The wood buildings he designed were generally characterized by Classical detailing such as two story engaged pilasters, cornice returns, modillioned cornices, pedimented main entries, and flared eaves that terminated a hipped roof.

Richmond School is one of the last remaining two-story balloon frame school buildings constructed in the city and designed by T. J. Jones. 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. The most influential district architects during this period included Thomas Jones, Floyd Naramore and George Jones who designed a majority of the schools from 1908 to 1932. To speed the construction of the new schools and to anticipate later growth in the neighborhood, these new buildings were often constructed in units sometimes referred to as extensible schools (Powers and Corning 1937: 182).

In response to growth in the southeast area of Portland, the district acquired the property at 2276 SE 41st for \$15, 893.309. The initial 8 classrooms were constructed for \$37, 760.00 in 1908. Designed to be extensible, additional building units were added in 1914 and 1915 (PPS School Chronology Binder). The construction of the gymnasium in 1927 filled in the original I-shaped plan. In 1953, the wing housing the multipurpose room was added to the north side of the school. Since that time many changes to the interior and finishes and fenestration have occurred (Portland Facility Profile).

Although designed by Thomas Jones, the first district architect for Portland Schools, Richmond School does not retain a level of historical integrity commensurate with other schools constructed during the early twentieth century and is therefore not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. None of the building's original Classical Revival detailing is now visible as several alterations have diminished the original building's integrity of materials, design, association, workmanship, and feeling. These alterations include the covering over of the original wood clapboard and architectural details as well as the addition of the north wing that houses the multipurpose room, changes to fenestration, and interior alterations to the classrooms, corridors, stairwells, and library. Due to the loss of integrity, Richmond Elementary 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

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. "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. School Chronology Binder.

_____. Richmond School Facility Plan.

_____. Richmond School Facility 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.

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

Sibley, Ernest. "Why I Prefer the Colonial Style." School Board Journal: Vol. 66 (January 1923).



West elevation front entry



East elevation



East elevation rear entry



North and west elevations



East elevation rear entry (and gymnasium)

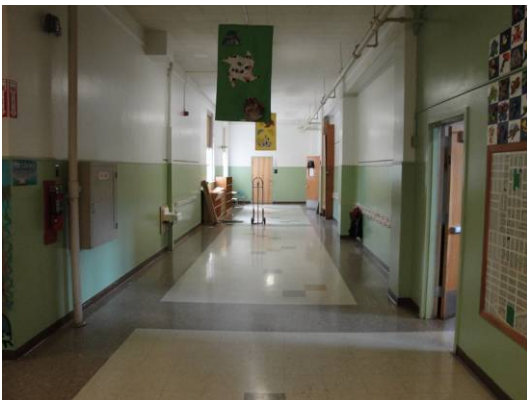
**Richmond School
Exterior Photos
ENTRIX, 2009**



First floor stairwell entry



Classroom built-in



Corridor looking south



Classroom built-in

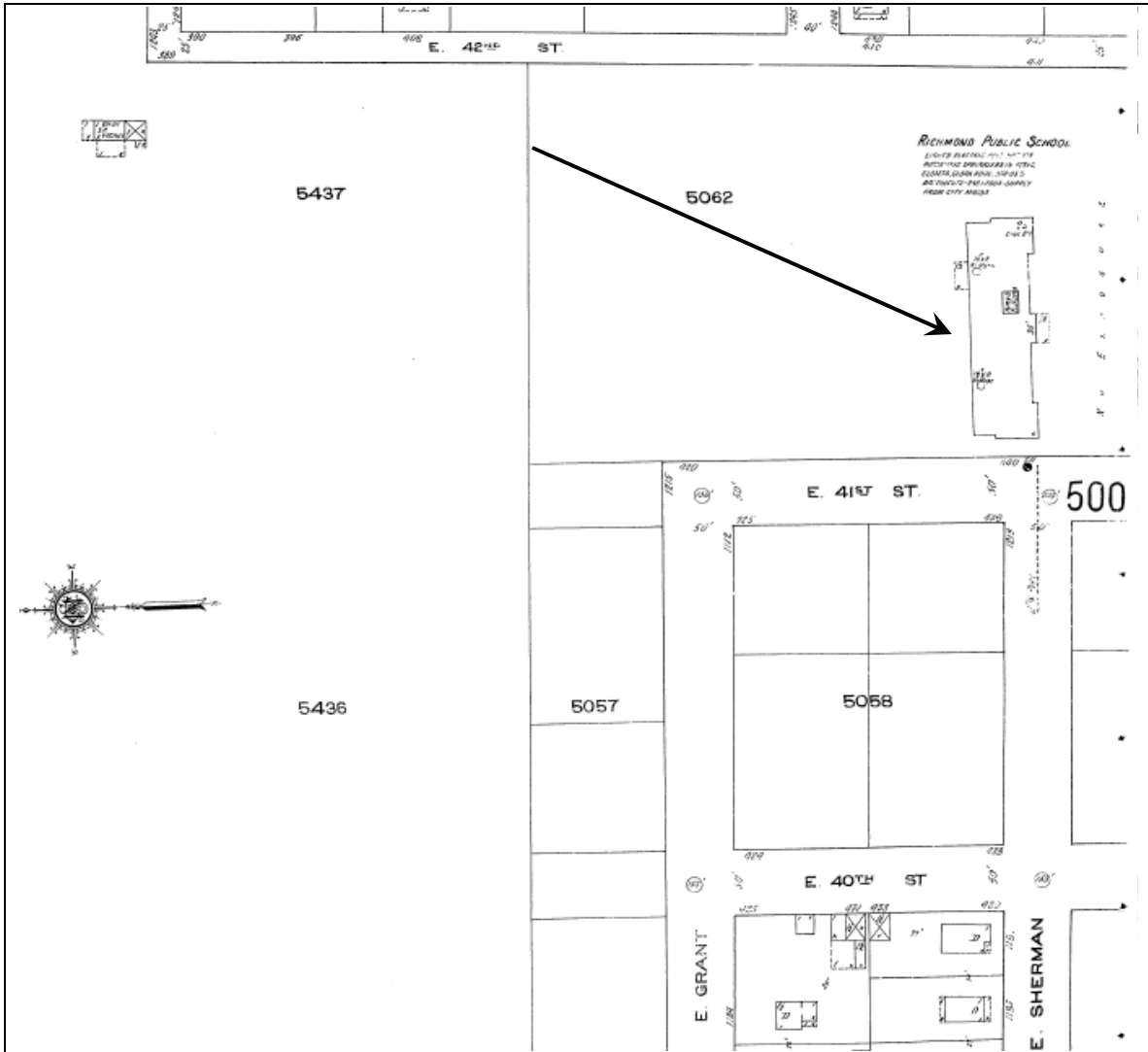


Gymnasium



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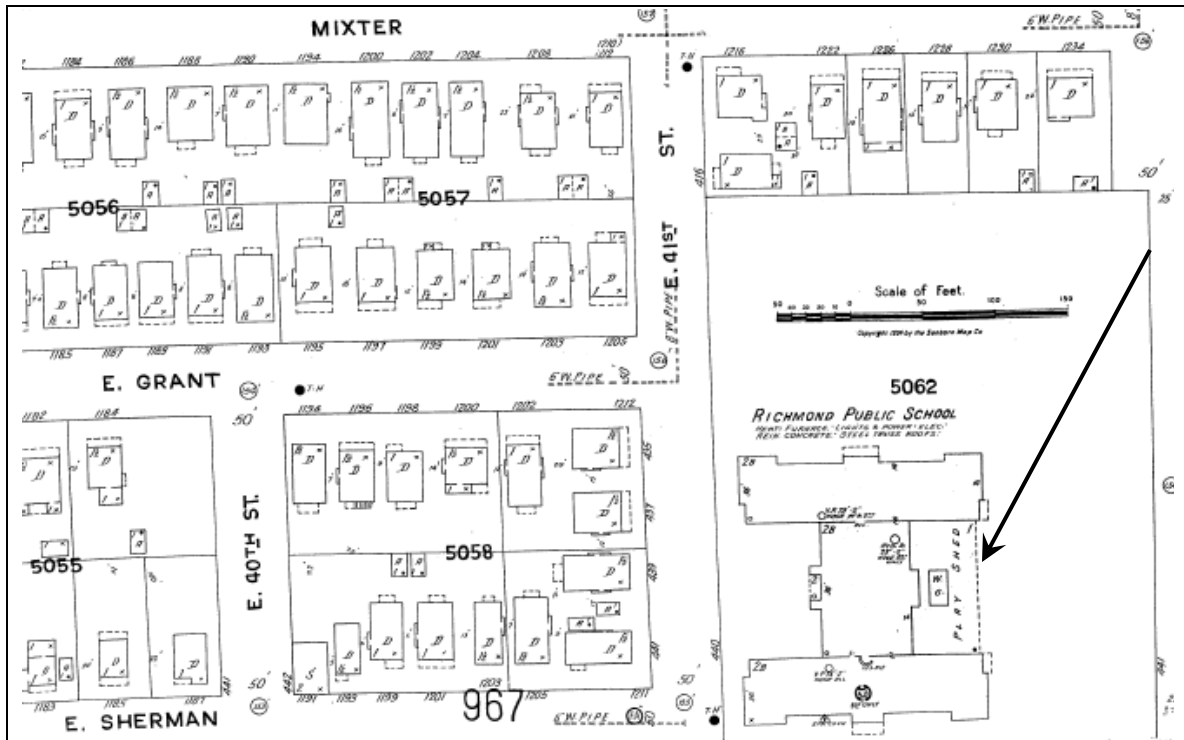


1908-1909, Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Portland, Oregon, Map 499. Arrow points to the first “unit” of Richmond Public School.



ENTRIX

Down to Earth. Down to Business.™

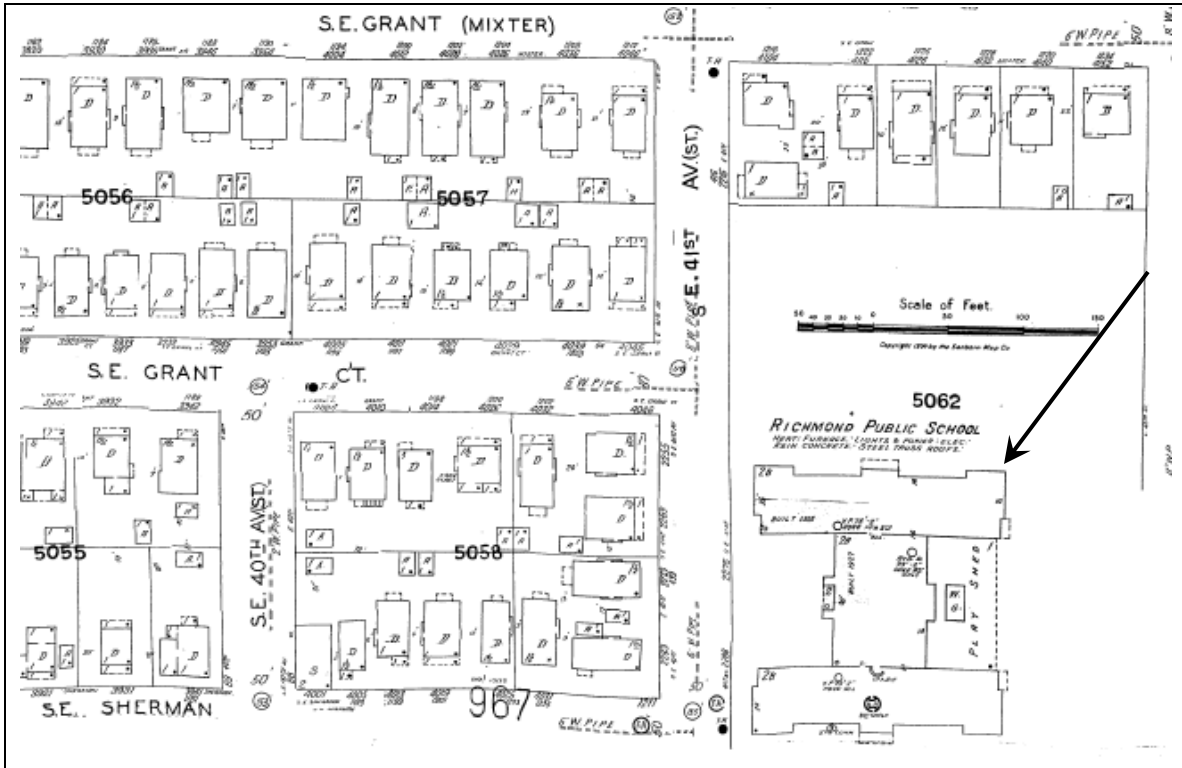


1924-1928, Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Portland, Oregon, Map 957. Arrow points to Richmond Public School.



ENTRIX

Down to Earth. Down to Business.™

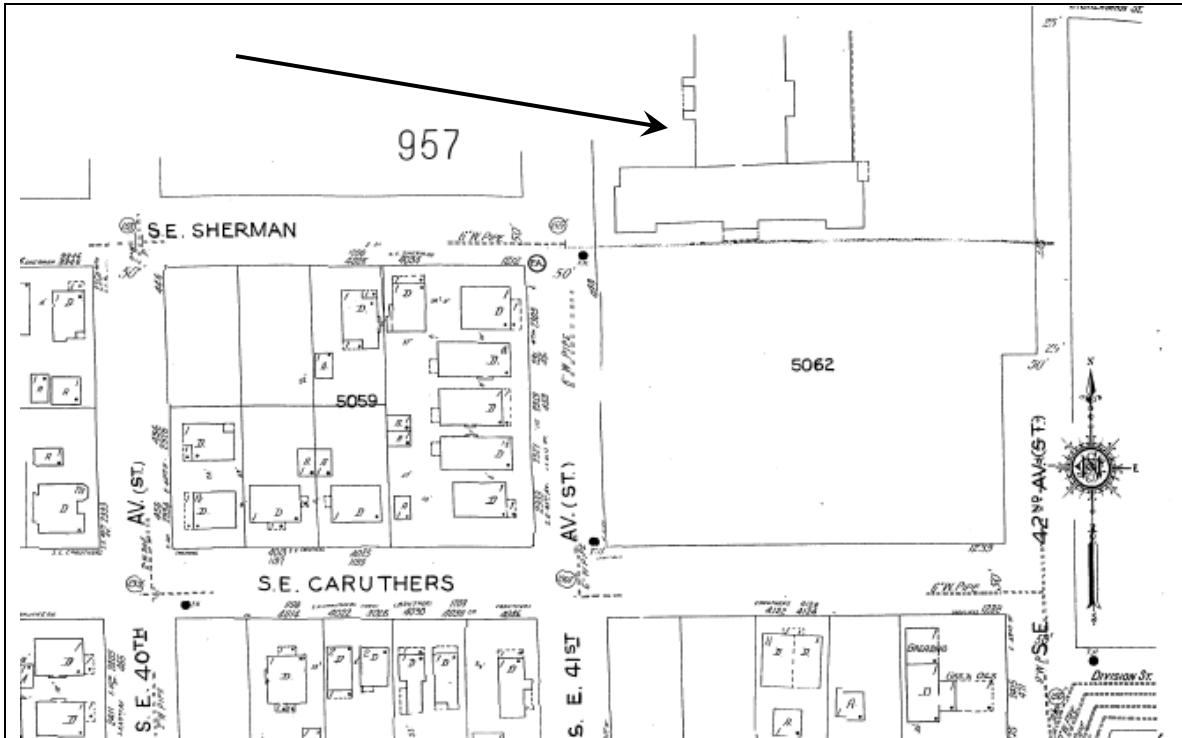


Updated to 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Portland, Oregon, Map 957.
Arrow points to Richmond Public School.



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Updated to 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Portland, Oregon, Map 967.
Arrow points to Richmond Public School. Map shows continuation of school building
from Map 957.

Richmond School

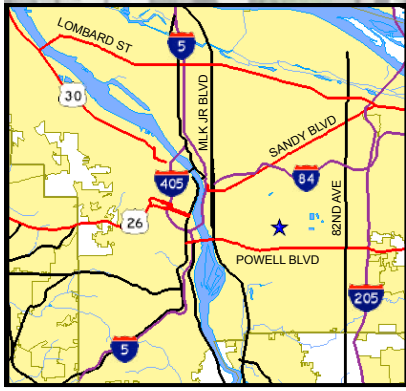
2276 SE 41st Ave, Portland OR, 97214

[View Site in Google Maps](#)






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

1950s photograph of the Richmond School after renovations.



Historical Significance and Building Integrity

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

Building Periods

1. Main Building (275A), 1908
2. Addition (275B), 1953

