

# Oregon Historic Site Form

Buckman Arts School  
320 16th Ave  
Portland, Multnomah County

## LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME

address: 320 SE 16th Ave  apprx. addr  
 Portland vcnty Multnomah County

historic name: Buckman Arts School  
 current/ other names: Buckman Elementary 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): 2 total # eligible resources: 1 total # ineligible resources: 1  
 elig. evaluation: eligible/significant NR status: \_\_\_\_\_  
 primary constr date: 1921 (c.)  secondary date: \_\_\_\_\_ (c.)  NR date listed: \_\_\_\_\_ (indiv listed only; see Grouping for hist dist)  
 (optional--use for major addns)  
 primary orig use: School orig use comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 secondary orig use: \_\_\_\_\_  
 primary style: Late Gothic Revival prim style comments: Collegiate Gothic  
 secondary style: \_\_\_\_\_ sec style comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 primary siding: Standard Brick siding comments: \_\_\_\_\_  
 secondary siding: Terra Cotta: Other/Undefined  
 plan type: School (General) architect: Naramore, F A  
 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 #: 143  
 (ID# used in city/agency database)

## SHPO INFO FOR THIS PROPERTY

NR date listed: \_\_\_\_\_  
 ILS survey date: 7/2/2009  
 RLS survey date: 7/2/2009  
 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 Buckman neighborhood of southeast Portland, the 1921 Buckman Elementary School consists of a U-shaped plan. The two-story Collegiate Gothic building is constructed of concrete with a facing of decorative brickwork and terra cotta detailing. The primary entrance is marked by a central pavilion with an arcaded recessed gallery. Entrances are marked by fanlights and terra cotta ornamentation that include Gothic styled lettering, four point arches, banded columns, quoins as well as projecting bay windows. Single, paired, and bands of aluminum windows provide the fenestration. The building is capped by a flat roof largely hidden by terra cotta coping along the parapet. Double loaded corridors provide access to the administrative offices, classrooms, and recreation spaces.

### Architectural Description

Buckman Elementary School (143A) is situated in the Buckman neighborhood of southeast Portland at 320 SE 16th Street. The neighborhood consists of single family residences built primarily between 1880 and 1960 (Sanborn Maps 1924-1928, Sanborn Map updated to 1950). The primary entrance to the facility is from SE 16th Avenue. Play areas and open space occupy the eastern end of the campus and are sited to the west of SE 18th Street. A covered play shed (143B, constructed in 2001) is located to the east of the main building.

The primary school facility has a U-shaped plan with an auditorium and two conjoined gymnasiums with each gymnasium accessed via the respective wings that form the 'U' shape. Rectangular classrooms and administrative offices comprise the other spaces located along the U-shaped corridor.

The two-story brick structure is ornamented by decorative brickwork and a terra cotta cornice. The primary entrance is marked by a central pavilion with an arcaded recessed gallery. Entrances are marked by fanlights and terra cotta ornamentation. Single, paired, and bands of aluminum windows provide the fenestration. The building is capped by a flat roof with terra cotta caps along the parapet and rests on a poured concrete foundation.

The principal entrances located along the east (front) elevation open into a lobby that is illuminated by the fanlights that cap the entry doors. The double loaded corridors are lined with a wood molding and exterior walls feature windows. Tubular fluorescent light fixtures are suspended from the acoustic tile clad ceiling. Wood doors with six pane lights provide access to the classrooms. Flooring consists of linoleum tiles and carpeting. The classrooms feature a rectangular plan with a recessed area that features cupboards. Classroom windows line the exterior walls and retain their wood surrounds.

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

### Alterations/ Integrity

The primary building was constructed in phases between 1922 and 1930. Alterations include the remodeling of the library in 1967 and 1977 and the school office in 1984. Other alterations include the replacement of ceiling tiles (1962), floor tiles (1985, 1988, and 1989), exterior doors (1987), windows (1987), classroom cabinets (1990), and lighting fixtures. A covered play shed was constructed to the east of the main building in 2001. This structure is a non-contributing resource.

Buckman Elementary School retains a high degree of integrity. No additions have been made to the primary school building. The building retains its original cladding, exterior details, and form. While most of the wood double hung windows have been replaced with aluminum windows, the size and spacing of the openings remain intact. The configuration of the corridors, public spaces (auditorium, gymnasiums, and swimming pool), and classroom design are intact. Although the flooring, ceiling tiles and lighting have been changed, other interior finishes including the wood molding and interior doors remain intact.

## HISTORY

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

# Oregon Historic Site Form

Buckman Arts School  
320 16th Ave  
Portland, Multnomah County

## Statement of Significance

Built in 1922 Buckman 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). 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). To meet the challenge of growth and to ensure the safety of children in this new era, the Portland City Council enacted a requirement on August 16, 1910 that all schools constructed after January 1, 1911 would have to be of fireproof construction (Powers and Corning 1937: 183).

Portland Public Schools (PPS) District Architect, Floyd Naramore, designed Buckman Elementary School. Floyd Naramore was one of the most influential district architects. Naramore along with George Jones designed a large majority of the schools between 1908 and 1932. Naramore, a native of Illinois, attended the University of Wisconsin and graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1907. Naramore's first employment after his arrival in Portland in 1909 was as an engineer for the Northwest Bridge Works. In 1912, he began his tenure at Portland Public Schools which would continue until 1919. During this period, Naramore designed 16 schools for the district including the Kennedy School which gained notoriety as a single story response to the issue of fire safety in American public schools (Evening Telegram 11-03-1915).

Naramore's success with Portland Public Schools led to a similar position in Seattle, where he designed many of the city's most renowned schools. Architect Victor Steinbrueck, credits Naramore for producing the best quality Motor Age architecture in the Puget Sound area (Vaughan and Feriday; Space Style and Structure, 1974: 508). Naramore subsequently founded several private architectural partnerships in the Seattle area. The best known firm, Naramore, Bain, Brady & Johansen had early success designing large World War II building projects. In the last half century, the firm grew into one of the largest architectural practices in the world (Ritz 2003: 293).

Just as Naramore began his position in Portland, PPS created the Bureau of Properties, where the district's architects took on a more formalized role in the design and maintenance of school facilities. The Bureau of Properties was created by PPS to also centralize management of the district's properties (Powers and Corning 1937: 182).

For Buckman Elementary School, Floyd Naramore 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 Buckman, were constructed of brick and concrete. The school is similar in plan to the two or three-story I-shaped schools that were constructed with a lateral corridor connected to the front entrance by one or more short hallways. Like other PPS buildings constructed during this period, Buckman contained more differentiated and increasingly specialized spaces (Powers and Corning 1937: 182). Buckman, for instance, included two gymnasiums (girls and boys), an auditorium, a basement swimming pool, and manual training classrooms (Sanborn Maps 1924-1928).

Buckman Elementary School was constructed in the Collegiate Gothic style that was popular for educational buildings during the first half of the twentieth-century. This style, which is characterized by symmetry, porticos at the entrance, and round 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).

Buckman Elementary School retains excellent historical integrity (of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association) with its plan and exterior and interior finishes. The 1921 Collegiate Gothic style school is recommended as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) for its association with Progressive Era public school construction in Portland. The school is a strong example of the principles that characterized the design of schools during this era; therefore, it is eligible for listing in the NRHP under Criterion A. Buckman Elementary School is an excellent example of the two-story Collegiate Gothic school buildings that were constructed during the early-twentieth century. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Collegiate Gothic style school building; therefore, it is 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         |  |

Local Library: Multnomah County Library

University Library: Portland State University Library

Historical Society: Oregon Historical Society

Other Repository: PPS Archives

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,

# Oregon Historic Site Form

Buckman Arts School  
320 16th Ave  
Portland, Multnomah County

No. 1 (January, 1967).

Portland Public Schools. School Chronology Binder. PPS Archives, Portland, Oregon.

\_\_\_\_\_. Buckman Elementary 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.

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 (143A), looking northeast.



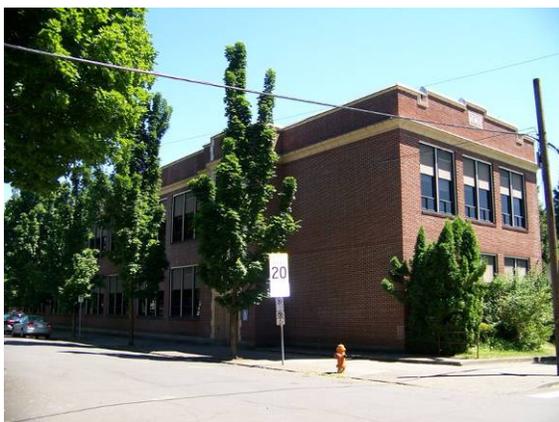
Main building (143A), looking southeast.



Main building (143A), looking northwest.



Main building (143A), looking westward.



Main building (143A), looking southeast.



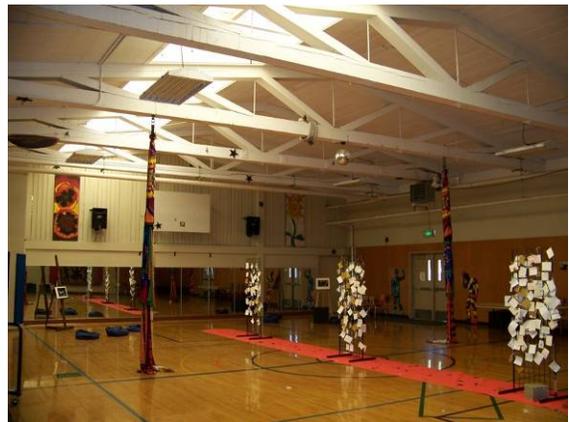
Main building (143A), main entryway lobby, looking northwest.



Main building (143A), second floor stairwell, looking north.



Main building (143A), second floor hallway, looking west.

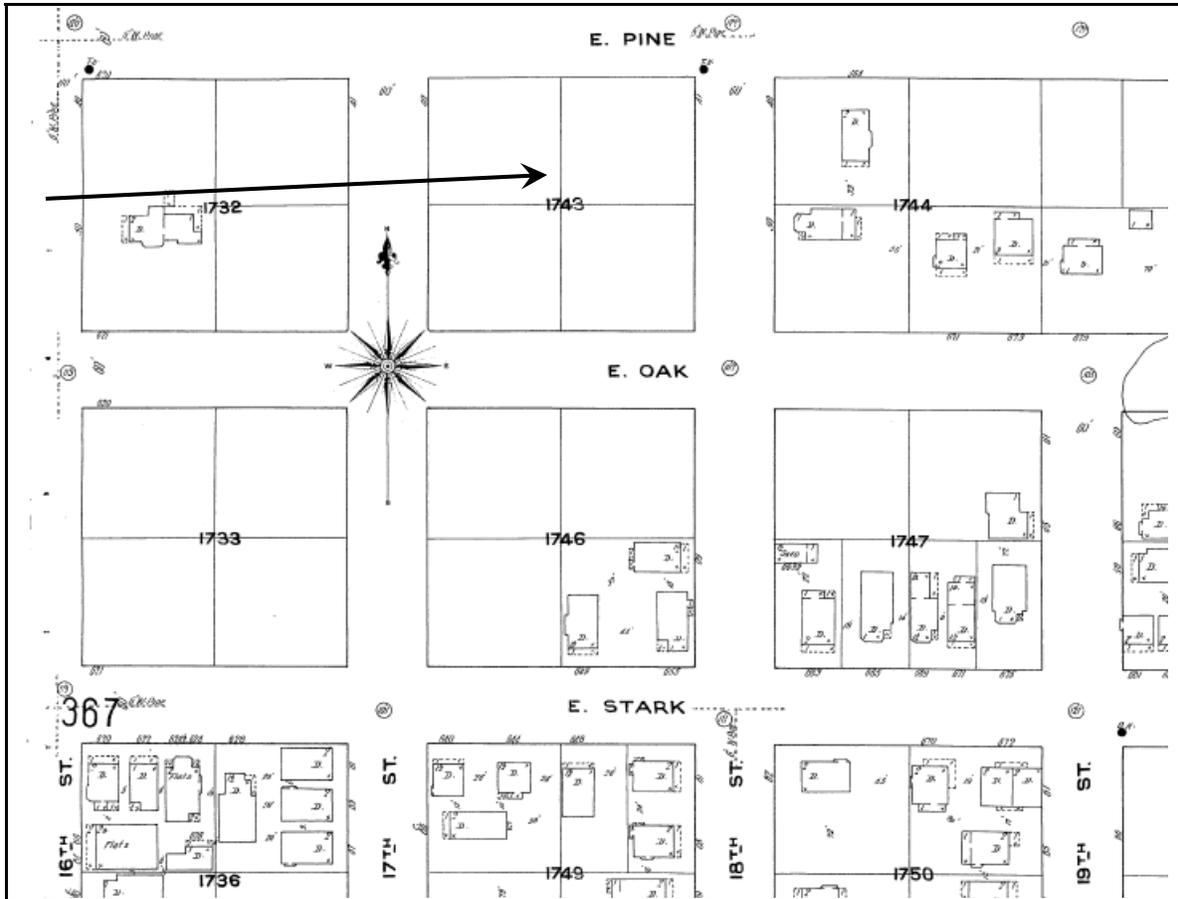


Main building (143A), gymnasium, looking northeast.



# ENTRIX

Down to Earth. Down to Business.™

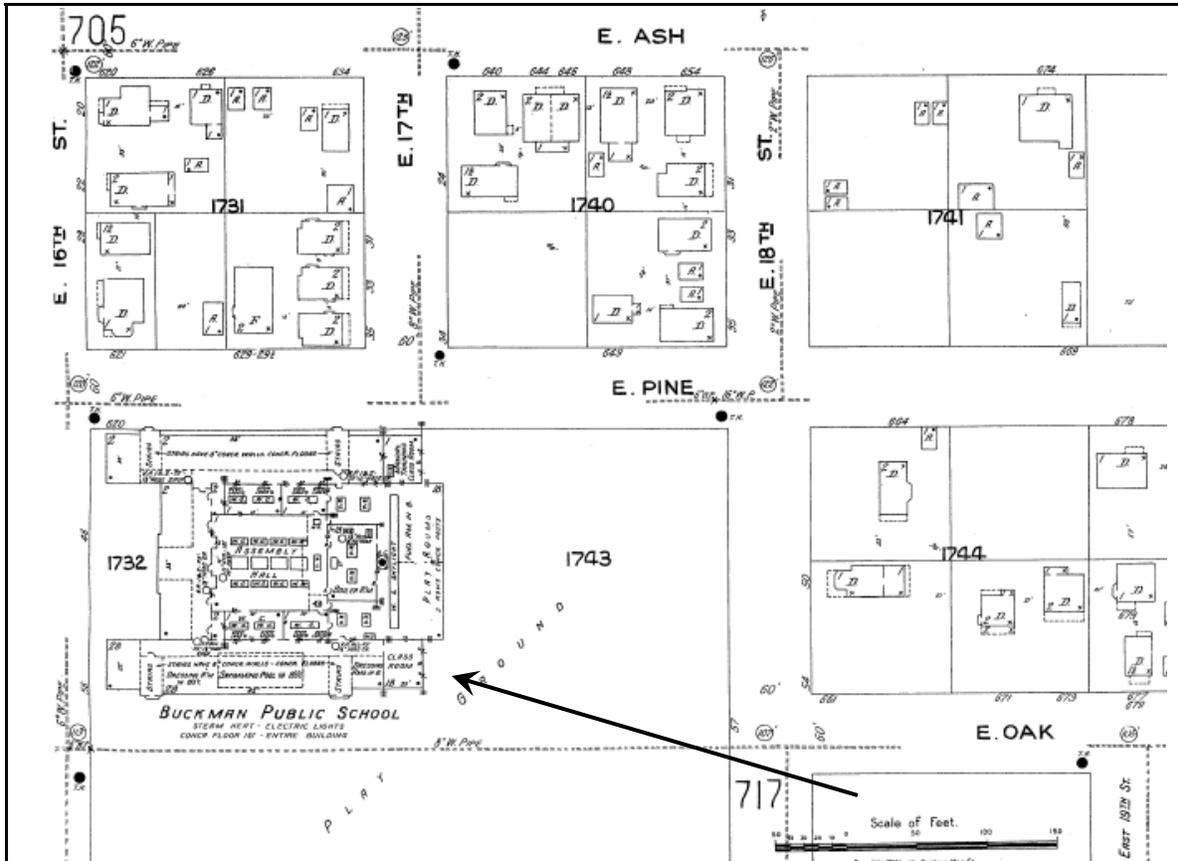


1908-1909 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Portland, Oregon, Map 368. Arrow points to the future location of Buckman Public School.



# ENTRIX

Down to Earth. Down to Business.™

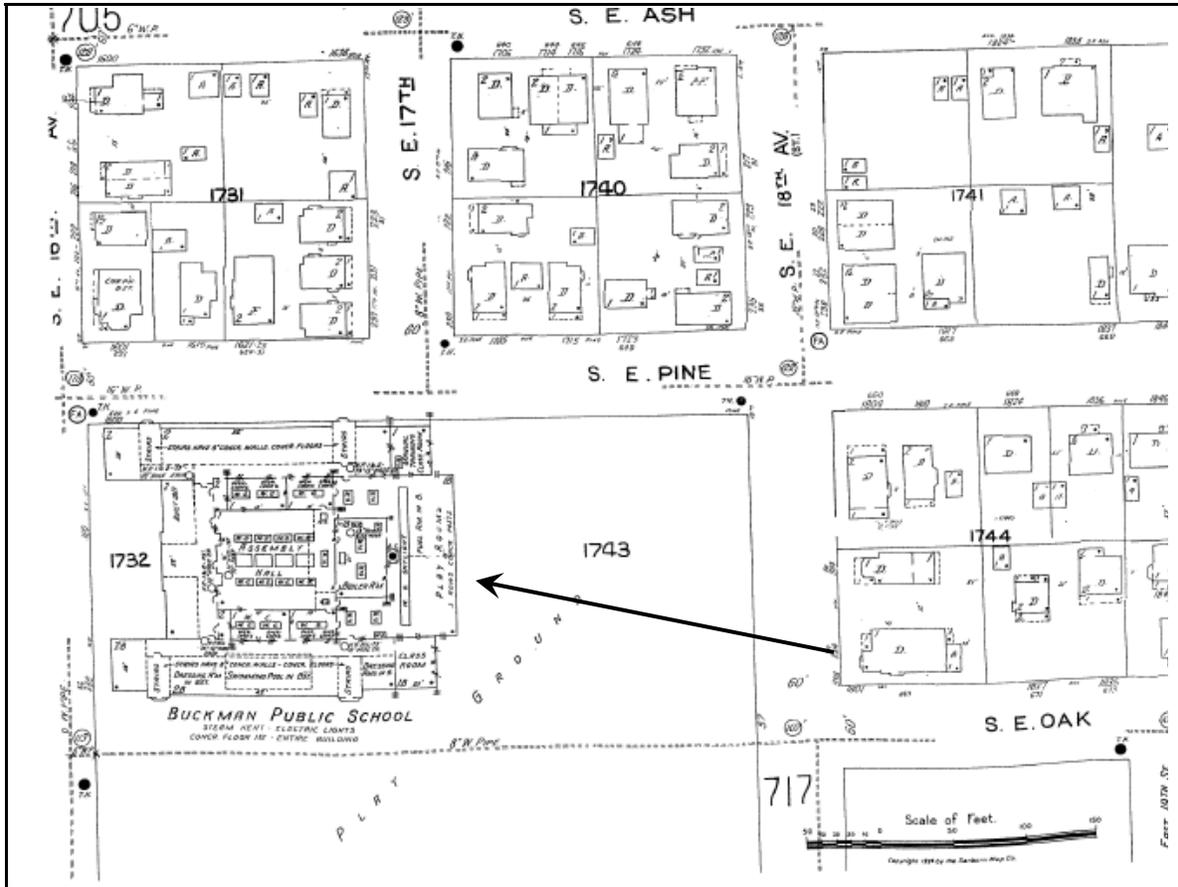


Updated to 1924-1928, Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Portland, Oregon, Map 706. Arrow points to Buckman Public School. Note the street change and the removal of the house that was once situated on the property.



# ENTRIX

Down to Earth. Down to Business.™

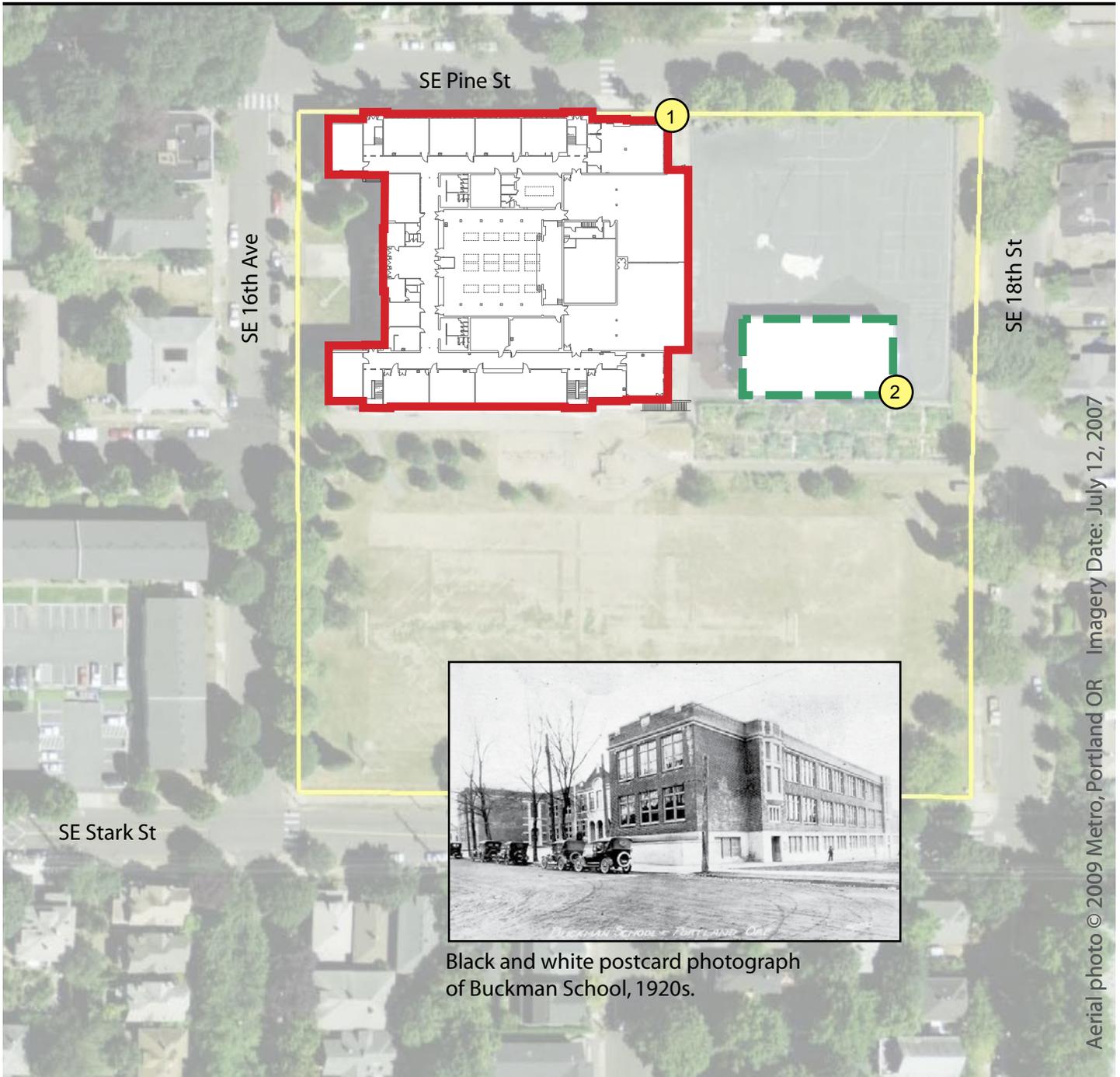


Updated to 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Portland, Oregon, Map 706.  
Arrow points to Buckman Public School.

# Buckman Arts School

320 SE 16th Ave, Portland OR, 97214

[View Site in Google Maps](#)



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



Black and white postcard photograph of Buckman School, 1920s.



### Historical Significance and Building Integrity

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

### Building Periods

1. Main Building (143A), 1922
2. Play Shed (143B), n.d.

