

# Oregon Historic Site Form

Chief Joseph School  
2409 Saratoga St  
Portland, Multnomah County

## LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME

address: <u>2409 N Saratoga St</u> <input type="checkbox"/> apprx. addr	historic name: <u>Chief Joseph School</u>
<u>Portland</u> <input type="checkbox"/> vcnty <u>Multnomah County</u>	current/ other names: <u>Holly Primary School, Chief Joseph Elementary 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>1</u>	total # eligible resources: <u>1</u> total # ineligible resources: <u>1</u>
elig. evaluation: <u>eligible/contributing</u>	NR status: _____ (indiv listed only; see Grouping for hist dist)
primary constr date: <u>1949</u> (c.) <input type="checkbox"/> secondary date: <u>1954</u> (c.) <input type="checkbox"/> (optional--use for major addns)	NR date listed: _____
primary orig use: <u>School</u>	orig use comments: _____
secondary orig use: _____	prim style comments: _____
primary style: <u>International</u>	sec style comments: _____
secondary style: _____	siding comments: _____
primary siding: <u>Horizontal Board</u>	architect: <u>Jones, William Henry</u>
secondary siding: <u>Brick:Other/Undefined</u>	builder: _____
plan type: <u>School (General)</u>	
comments/notes: <u>HRI Rank III.</u>	

## GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS

survey project name or other grouping name	<u>PPS Historic Building Assessment 2009</u>	<u>Survey &amp; Inventory Project</u>
farmstead/cluster name:		external site #: <u>148</u> (ID# used in city/agency database)

## SHPO INFO FOR THIS PROPERTY

NR date listed: \_\_\_\_\_  
ILS survey date: 6/25/2009  
RLS survey date: 6/25/2009  
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 Arbor Lodge neighborhood of north Portland, Chief Joseph Elementary School is located at 2409 N Saratoga Street. The school occupies the southern portion of the 2.83-acre campus. In addition to the main school building (148A), the campus also features a portable classroom building (148P). Aligned on an east-west axis, the wood frame school building is constructed in the International style. Cladding consists of a mixture of horizontal board, brick, and poured concrete. A shallow pitched gable roof covers the rectangular shaped building that rests on a poured concrete foundation. The two story east wing includes two floors of classrooms and a double height gymnasium and auditorium. Fenestration consists of grouped wood frame windows.

### Architectural Description

Situated in the Arbor Lodge neighborhood of north Portland, Chief Joseph Elementary School is located at 2409 N Saratoga Street. The school occupies the southern portion of the 2.83-acre campus. The primary entrance to the campus is from the south on N Saratoga Street. Development in the vicinity of the school consists of a mixture of single family residences built between 1929 and 1950, larger multi-family residential buildings, and commercial buildings (Sanborn Maps 1924-1928, Sanborn Map 1908-1950). Arbor Lodge Park is located across N Delaware Avenue from the west side of the school campus. In addition to the main school building (148A), the campus also features a portable classroom building (148P). Asphalt covered play areas are located on the north side of the campus.

Chief Joseph Elementary School features a finger plan. Aligned on an east-west axis, the International style school building is wood frame construction. Cladding consists of a mixture of horizontal board, brick, and poured concrete. The building rests on a poured concrete foundation. The main mass of the building is single story. The two story east wing includes two floors of classrooms and a double height gymnasium and auditorium. Fenestration consists of grouped wood frame windows. A shallow pitched gable roof covers the rectangular shaped building.

A projecting entrance surrounded with red brick provides the main entrance to the school. Wood entry doors, flanked by glass block pilasters, provide access to a double height lobby on the south side of the school. From the lobby double loaded corridors extend to the west and east to provide access to the school facilities. The walls of the corridors are lined with a composition tile wainscot. Glulam beams support the ceiling. Flooring consists of a mixture of concrete, wood, tile, and carpet. Fluorescent light fixtures are affixed to the acoustic tiles that cover the ceiling.

A library is located immediately opposite of the lobby on the north side of building. The open room is carpeted and lined with bookshelves. The walls above the bookcases are decorated with mosaics depicting characters from children's books.

The east wing of the school, added in 1956, contains the gymnasium and multi-purpose room. Located on the south side of the school, the multi-purpose room receives ample light from the fixed frame wood windows. Glulam beams support the ceiling of the double height space. Folding tables and benches facilitate the use of the room as a cafeteria. Finishes consist of wood panels, linoleum tile floors, and an acoustic tile ceiling. The gymnasium is located on the north side of the school. The ceiling of the space is supported by slightly sloping glulam beams.

The classrooms in the west wing are L-shaped with a small alcove for storage. Blonde wood built-ins on the interior walls provide additional acoustic barriers between the classrooms. Tubular fluorescent light fixtures are suspended from the classroom ceilings. Operable transom windows on the corridor walls provide additional illumination and ventilation. The classrooms in the east wing of the school are square. The finishes in this wing are more utilitarian and there are no transom windows in the corridor.

### Alterations/Integrity

While there have been substantial alterations to the school building and grounds since its construction in 1949, the Chief Joseph Elementary School still exhibits a moderate degree of integrity. In 1954 two classrooms were added at the east side of the building. This wing was expanded again in 1956 to include the two story gymnasium, cafeteria, and additional classrooms. The primary interior alterations consist of changes to the floor tiles and carpet (Chief Joseph Facility Plan and Profile). While these alterations and additions the school are significant, they do not fundamentally alter the integrity of the school.

## 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

In response to the significant growth experienced in north Portland after World War II, the district acquired land at 2409 N Saratoga St. for \$22,773.72. Originally the district planned to name the school Holly Primary but opted instead to name the school in honor of Chief Joseph of the Nez Pierce Indians, (Sydney 1979: 237; Portland Chronology Binder). The school was constructed in 1949 for \$133,333.00. Chief Joseph Elementary School was one of the first new schools built 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 (Portland Public Schools 1945: 2). The ballot measure enabled the 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 (Portland Public Schools 1945: 2-3). Beginning with this initial bond measure, PPS embarked on an effort to improve its school facilities through renovations, additions, and the new construction of over fifty schools between 1945 and 1970.

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 Walter Gropius led Architects Collective, and the Perkins Will architectural firm 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, glass block, and aluminum. In many buildings, architects achieved flexibility through the building's structure by employing non load-bearing partition 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).

Although many of the architects for schools in Portland continued to design their schools to be extensible, designers turned away from the two-story schools with centralized massing popularized by earlier school architects F. A. Naramore and G.H. Jones. Instead, many architects adopted the principles of the Modern movement and its regional variant, the Northwest Regional style, choosing to express functional areas through massing and materials to create innovative forms (McMath 1974: 628). Classrooms featured extensive built-ins that included sinks, slots for bulky rolls of paper, and coat storage. Many buildings feature long horizontal plans or incorporated interior courtyards to facilitate access to the outdoors and expand the opportunities for passive ventilation and daylighting.

Little information is available on the career or background of William Henry Jones, the architect of Chief Joseph Elementary School. He served as the Director of Plant Inspection and Planning for PPS from 1947-1950. In this capacity Jones was involved with the early planning of the massive program of construction and modernization implemented by the district in the mid-twentieth century. In addition to Astor Elementary School, Sitton Elementary, Chief Joseph Elementary, and Ball Elementary Schools, William Henry Jones is also listed as the architect of the Cleveland Field house and an addition to Capitol Hill school (Portland Chronology Binder).

A good example of a mid-twentieth century school design, that retains its integrity with its finger plan and many exterior and interior finishes intact, Chief Joseph Elementary School is recommended as eligible for the NRHP. The school was built in response to the residential development in north Portland during the PPS program of post-war construction and is eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A. Although responsible for the design of several Portland Schools, archival research does not indicate that William Henry Jones was considered a master in the Portland area. However, the building is a good example of the use of the mid-century materials and planning to facilitate rapid construction and expansion and is eligible for 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:

### Bibliography

McMath, George. "A Regional Style Comes to the City." In *Space, Style and Structure: Buildings in Northwest America*. Ed. Thomas Vaughan, 467-499. Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 1974.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The Wood Tradition Expands. In *Space, Style and Structure: Buildings in Northwest America*. Ed. Thomas Vaughan, 628-647. Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 1974.

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.

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

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Superintendent, 1945.

\_\_\_\_\_. Portland Public Schools Chronology Binder.

\_\_\_\_\_. Chief Joseph Elementary School. Facility Plan.

\_\_\_\_\_. Chief Joseph Elementary School. Facility Profile.

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



South elevation facing northeast



South elevation looking north



Portable facing northeast



North Elevation



East Elevation

**Chief Joseph School  
Exterior Photos  
ENTRIX, 2009**



Corridor facing west



Auditorium facing east



Gymnasium



Library



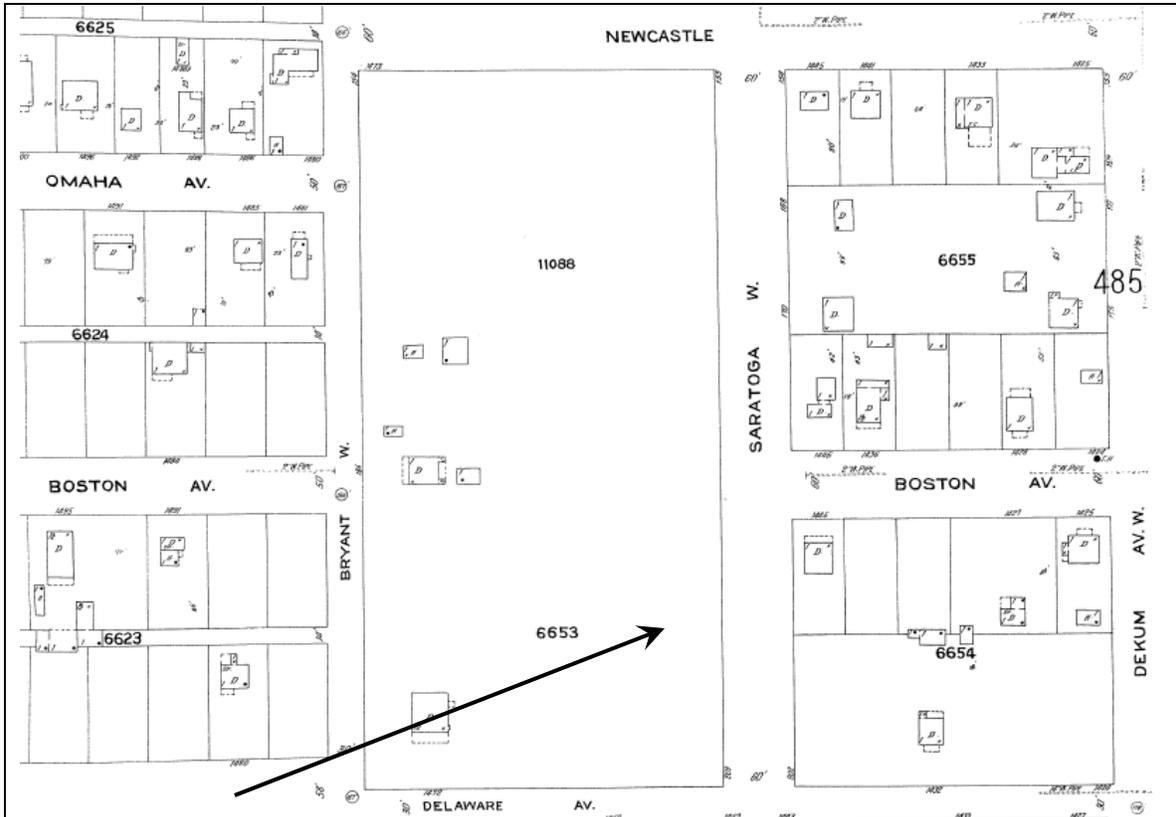
Classroom built-in

**Chief Joseph School  
Interior Photos  
ENTRIX, 2009**



**ENTRIX**

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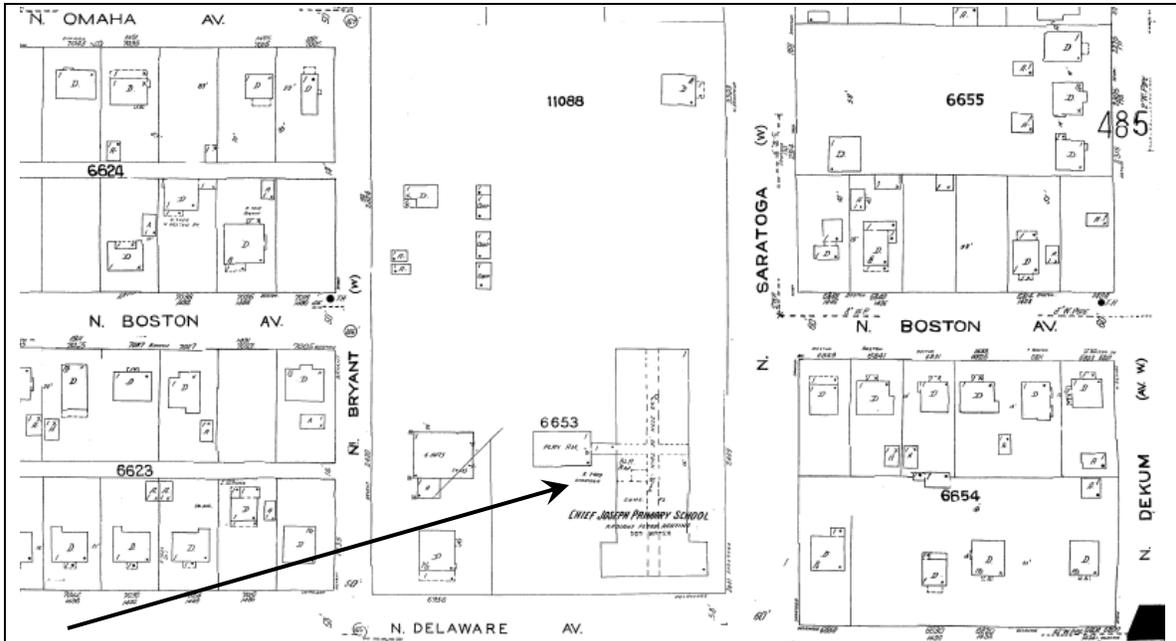


1924-1928, Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Portland, Oregon, Map 484. Arrow points to the future location of Chief Joseph Primary School (once called the Holly School).



# ENTRIX

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Updated to 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Portland, Oregon, Map 484.  
Arrow points to Chief Joseph Primary School.

# Chief Joseph School

2409 N Saratoga St, Portland OR, 97217

[View Site in Google Maps](#)



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



2009 photograph of the main entrance..



## Historical Significance and Building Integrity

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



## Building Periods

1. Main Building (148A), 1949
2. Addition (148A), 1954
3. Addition (148B), 1956
4. Portable Classrooms (148P), 1991