

Oregon Historic Site Form

Clarendon-Portsmouth School
5103 Willis Blvd
Portland, Multnomah County

LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME

address: <u>5103 N Willis Blvd</u> <input type="checkbox"/> apprx. addr	historic name: <u>Clarendon-Portsmouth School</u>
<u>Portland</u> <input type="checkbox"/> vcnty <u>Multnomah County</u>	current/ other names: <u>Portsmouth 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>0</u> total # ineligible resources: <u>1</u>
elig. evaluation: <u>not eligible/non-contributing</u>	NR status: _____ NR date listed: _____ (indiv listed only; see Grouping for hist dist)
primary constr date: <u>1928</u> (c.) <input type="checkbox"/> secondary date: _____ (c.) <input type="checkbox"/> (optional--use for major addns)	orig use comments: _____
primary orig use: <u>School</u>	prim style comments: _____
secondary orig use: _____	sec style comments: <u>Pantile roof</u>
primary style: <u>Classical Revival: other</u>	siding comments: _____
secondary style: <u>Spanish Revival</u>	architect: <u>Jones, George</u>
primary siding: <u>Standard Brick</u>	builder: _____
secondary siding: <u>Cast Stone</u>	
plan type: <u>School (General)</u>	
comments/notes: <u>HRI Rank II.</u>	

GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS

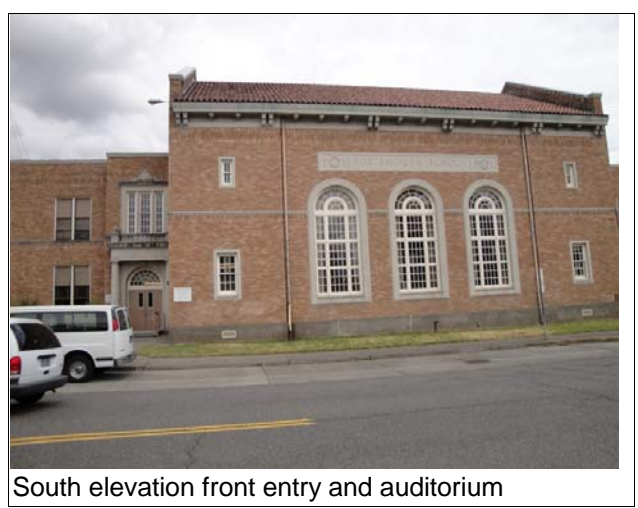
survey project name or other grouping name	<u>PPS Historic Building Assessment 2009</u>	<u>Survey & Inventory Project</u>
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farmstead/cluster name: _____ external site #: 182
(ID# used in city/agency database)

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 primarily single family residential neighborhood of Portsmouth in North Portland, Clarendon-Portsmouth School is located at 5103 North Willis Boulevard. The two-story school building (182A) with a ground floor basement is located on a 3.3-acre campus. Built in 1928, the hybrid style building features Classical Revival detailing as well as Spanish Revival/Mediterranean Revival style tile roof. Cladding for the reinforced concrete structure consists of brick veneer with cast stone ornamentation. The building's irregularly shaped plan provides spaces for classrooms, a media center, an auditorium, a gymnasium, a cafeteria, and an administrative office.

Architectural Description

Situated in the primarily single family, residential neighborhood of Portsmouth in North Portland, Clarendon-Portsmouth School is located at 5103 North Willis Boulevard. The school, which faces North Willis Boulevard, is situated at the south side of the 3.3-acre campus. The building is surrounded by asphalt covered parking lots and play areas. Grass covered play areas occupy the northeast portion of the campus.

The two-story school building with a ground floor basement is oriented on an east-west axis. Clad in variegated brick, the reinforced concrete building sits on a poured concrete foundation. The Classical Revival style building features a pantile roof. Classical Revival style details include a cast stone bracketed cornice below the roof line, door and window surrounds, and decorative panels. The entrances are distinguished by porches with Tuscan columns and a balustrade with finials. Polygonal bays project from the front (south) and side (east and west) elevations.

The building features a variety of fenestration types including original wood frame, multi light, and replacement metal frame windows. The original fenestration consists of a set of three wood frame, multi-light arched auditorium windows on the front (south) elevation, and round arched windows and doors with fanlight/sunburst windows. There are also flat-headed windows with multi-light double hung sash over the entrances. Many of the windows now feature symmetrically placed metal frame 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 louver vents. Some of the wood frame rectangular shape windows on the stairwell landings between the 1st and 2nd floors are intact. The original wooden, fixed pane entry doors with cast stone surrounds capped by sunburst/fanlight windows have also been retained.

The interior layout of the school is organized around a central U-shaped corridor plan. Two short hallways that run north-south connect to the main corridor from the entry doors and the second floor staircases. The installation of partition walls to delineate the entries to several rooms altered the width of the corridors. The second floor hallways skylights are covered with an opaque laminate. The ceilings have been lowered and covered with acoustic tile. Fluorescent lights have replaced the original light fixtures. The wood molding and framing has been painted, and the wooden display cases have been removed. Flooring consists of linoleum tiles. Single leaf metal doors provide access to the classrooms from the hallways.

Some of the stairwell fenestration, consisting of wood frame windows on the first and second floor are intact, and most of the stairwells retain their original concrete steps and landings, veneer plaster walls, wooden railings and molding, and steam radiators. The molding has been painted and there are contemporary light fixtures.

The classrooms are primarily rectangular. Standard features include built-in cabinetry and closets for storing coats and supplies. While the classrooms retain their original rectangular configuration and height, there are minimal built-ins, and some rooms have lowered ceilings. All the rooms have veneer plaster walls, tiled flooring and tubular fluorescent light fixtures suspended from the acoustic tile ceilings. The molding and framing is painted in a number of the rooms.

The former auditorium, located on the 1st floor, is now utilized as a media center/library. The original seating, ceiling and wall light fixtures have been removed. The stage and the balcony have been enclosed. The original wood frame, semi-circular/arched, multi-light windows are intact.

The gymnasium, located on the first floor, retains its original configuration and double height supported by steel trusses. The facility has concrete walls, radiators on the wall, partially covered skylights and has a mixture of wood frame, nine-over-nine, and double hung sash windows.

The building is heated by steam boilers located in the ground floor basement behind the gymnasium. The clay tiles on one of the walls in the boiler room are exposed. Radiators with metal covers are found in the hallways, stairwells and in the classrooms. Grilles set in the wall provide heat and cool air for the basement rooms. Cool air is pushed through the building's vents by compressor-powered fans.

The multi-purpose room/cafeteria is located in the northeast wing of the first floor. Folding tables and benches that recess into the wall facilitate the use of the room as a cafeteria. The facility includes a stage and tiled floors.

Alterations/Integrity

In 1955 the cafeteria wing was added to the northeast side of the building. At this time, a small wing was also added to the west side of the gymnasium. In the 1970s more extensive alterations to the school occurred in the northeast and northwest wings. In 1976, there was major interior remodeling of the auditorium, library and of the classrooms and hallways. A significant alteration to the exterior occurred in 1987 when metal frame windows replaced most of the original wood frame, multi-light windows.

The Clarendon-Portsmouth Middle School retains a poor-to-fair degree of integrity. The remodels to the interior altered the auditorium and many of the classrooms. Partition walls blur the original corridor configuration. Although the original wood frame windows have been retained in the auditorium, gymnasium, and a couple of the stairwell landings, the majority of the windows were replaced with incompatible metal frame windows.

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While the school's distinctive brick veneer, cast stone cornice and cast stone window and door surrounds are intact, the one story brick additions on the rear and side elevations detract from the building's historic design, features and materials.

HISTORY

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

Statement of Significance

In response to development in North Portland, Portland Public Schools acquired the property at 5103 N Willis Boulevard for \$9,200.00 in 1909. Constructed for \$280,000, the new two story brick facility replaced an earlier building on the property (Oregonian. 08-19-1928; PPS School Chronology Binder). The Clarendon-Portsmouth School was 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 district 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 where new residential development was occurring (Cubberley 1915: 283-285, 288-290).

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. Two of the most influential district architects during this period included Floyd Naramore and George Jones who designed a majority of the schools from 1908 to 1932.

Like Portsmouth school, these new school buildings were often constructed of brick and concrete and were one or two stories in height. The buildings also contained more differentiated and increasingly specialized instructional spaces such as libraries, gymnasiums, science rooms, music rooms, and assembly spaces (Powers and Corning 1937: 182).

The architect of Portsmouth School, George Jones, was well versed in the design of school facilities through his role as Superintendent of building for the district. The son of Thomas J. Jones, who had also served as district architect for many years, George Jones was born in Portland in 1887. After attending Oregon State College for two years, George Jones obtained a degree in architecture in 1913. Jones worked in New York for several years before serving in the U.S. Army Combat Engineers during World War I. Following his return to Portland in 1920, Jones obtained his architecture license. He quickly assumed the position of school architect after his predecessor Floyd A. Naramore became district architect for the Seattle School District.

In his role as district architect, George Jones designed about 25 new schools and supervised the construction of additions for many existing building. Following his tenure with the Portland Schools, Jones went into private practice in Portland. With architect Harold Marsh, he established the firm of Jones & Marsh. Throughout his career Jones continued to specialize in school design, with projects in Pendleton, Klamath Falls and Oregon City. The firm of Jones & Marsh also designed additions to Roosevelt High School in Portland, buildings at Concordia Academy, and the Engineering wing and coliseum at Oregon State College in Corvallis (Ritz 2002: 217).

For the design of Portsmouth School, Jones employed a hybridized version of the Classical Revival style that also included Spanish Colonial/Mediterranean Revival details. Architectural revivals, such as Classical Revival, Colonial Revival, and Collegiate Gothic styles, were viewed as inspirational and appropriate for educational settings (Betelle 1919: 28; Sibley 1923: 66; Patton 1967: 1-8).

Portsmouth School is one of the few schools constructed in Portland between the onset of the Great Depression in 1929 and World War II in 1941. Once building resumed, many of the schools were modified to meet the new standards for lighting, acoustics, and facilities. In 1955 the cafeteria wing was added to the northeast side of the building (Portland Public Schools 1945: 2). At this time, a small wing was also added to the west side of the gymnasium. In the 1970s more extensive alterations to the school occurred in the northeast and northwest wings. In 1976, there was major interior remodeling of the auditorium, library, classrooms and hallways. In addition to remodeling several classrooms and other spaces to support team teaching, work was performed on the plumbing, heating, lighting, and electrical systems (Oregon Journal. 01-17-1975).

While Portsmouth School is a notable historic resource that is representative of public school planning during the progressive era and the work of George Jones, it does not retain a level of historical integrity commensurate with other Portland Schools constructed during the same period; therefore, it is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The 1955 and 1970 additions altered the original U-shape of the building by extending the building to the north and filling in portions of the central bay. Remodels during the 1970s to classrooms and hallways have reconfigured character defining spaces and finishes. The conversion of the auditorium to a media center resulted in the loss of significant architecture features. The replacement of the original wood frame windows dramatically changed the appearance of the exterior. Due to the loss of integrity, Clarendon- Portsmouth Middle School is not eligible under NRHP Criteria A, B, or C.

RESEARCH INFORMATION

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(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.
- Oregon Journal. "Six Day School Clears Way for Remodeling." 01-17-1975.
- 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.
- Oregonian. "Three new schools ready for opening." 08-19-1928.
- Portland Public Schools. Repairing, Rehabilitating and Modernizing the School Plant. Portland: Portland Public Schools. Office of the Superintendent, 1945.
- _____. Schools Chronology Binder.
- _____. Portsmouth Middle School Facility Plan.
- _____. Portsmouth Middle 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).



ENTRIX

Down to Earth. Down to Business.™



West elevation



East elevation



South elevation front entry (and auditorium)



South and west elevations



South elevation front entry

**Clarendon-Portsmouth School
Exterior Photos
ENTRIX, 2009**



Multi-Purpose Room



Classroom facing west



Second floor corridor



Stairwell facing south

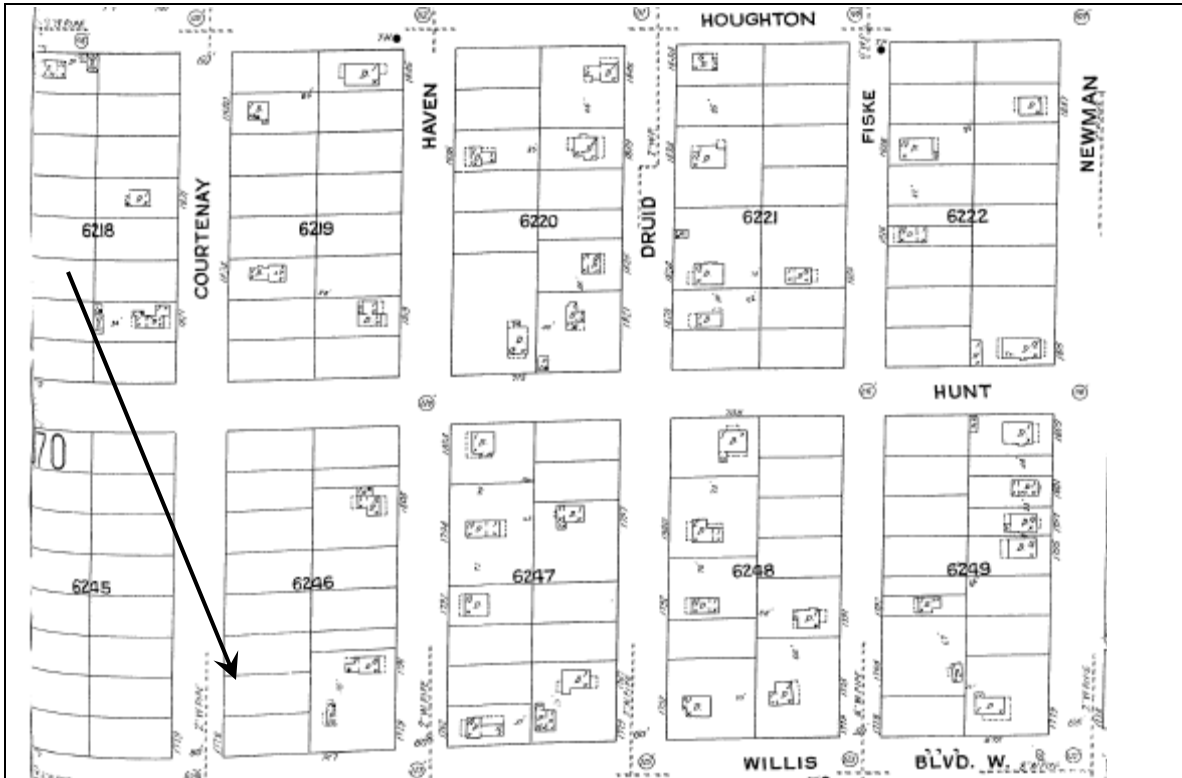


Classroom built-ins



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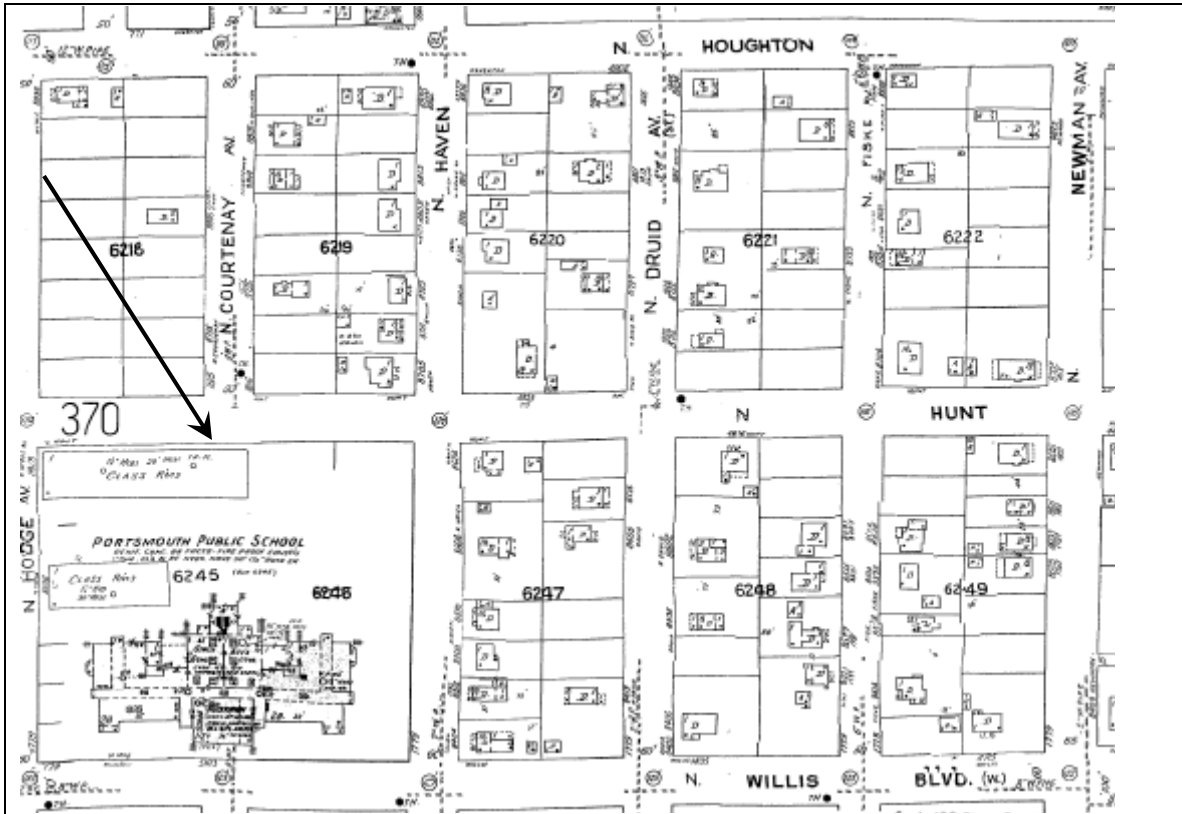


1924-1928, Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Portland, Oregon, Map 358. Arrow points to future location of Portsmouth Public School.



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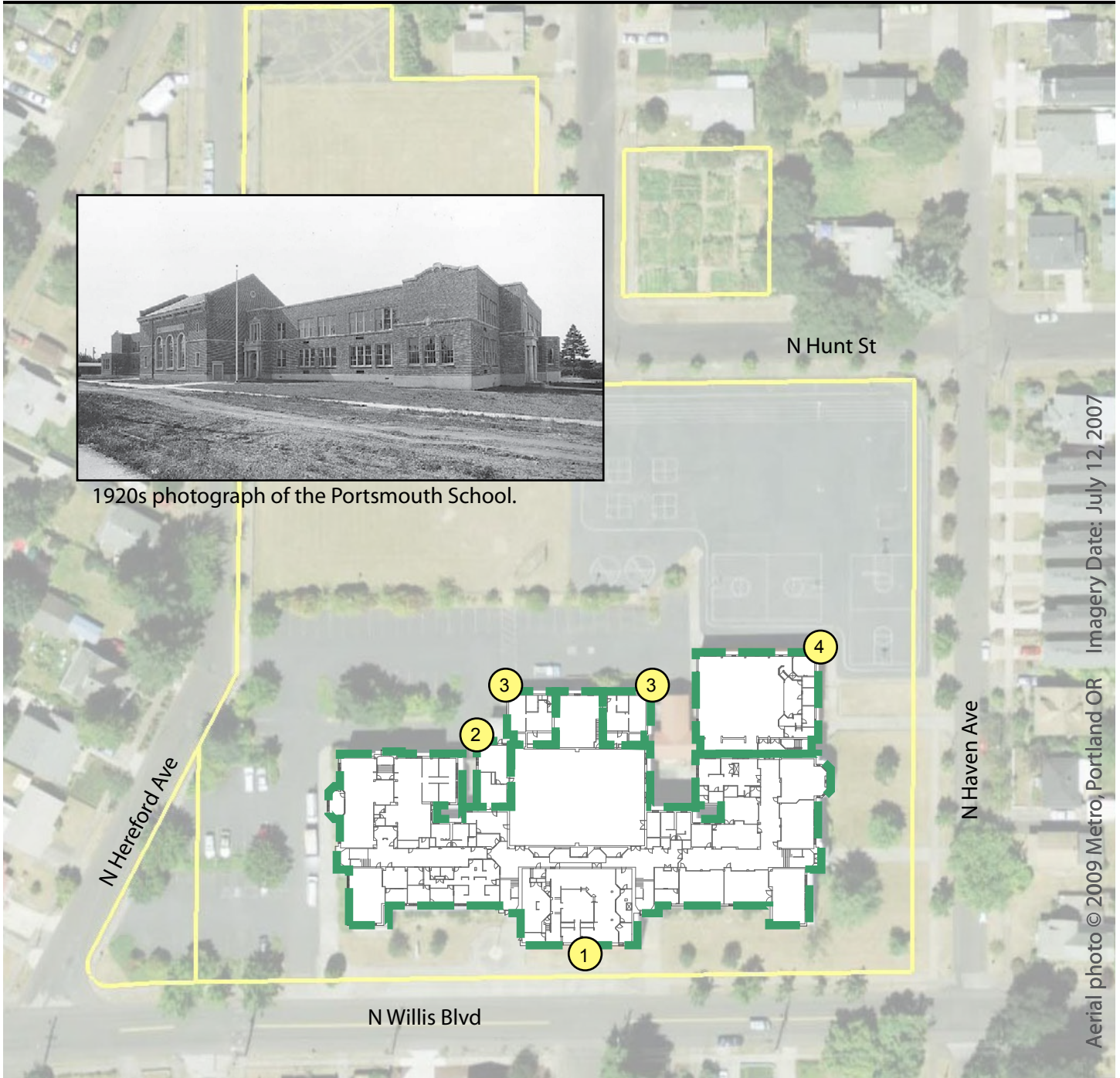


Updated to 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Portland, Oregon, Map 358. Arrow points to Portsmouth Public School. Note street changes and removal of houses at school location property.

Clarendon-Portsmouth School

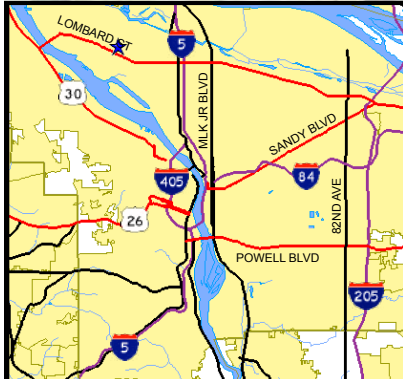
5103 N Willis Blvd, Portland OR, 97203

[View Site in Google Maps](#)






1920s photograph of the Portsmouth 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. Main Building (182A), 1927
2. Addition (182A), 1955
3. Addition (182A), 1970
4. Multi-Purpose Room (182A), 1987