

# Oregon Historic Site Form

Creative Science School  
1231 92nd Ave  
Portland, Multnomah County

## LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME

address: <u>1231 SE 92nd Ave</u> <input type="checkbox"/> apprx. addr	historic name: <u>Creative Science School</u>
<u>Portland</u> <input type="checkbox"/> vcnty <u>Multnomah County</u>	current/ other names: <u>Clark School, William Clark School</u>
Optional Information assoc addresses: (former addresses, intersections, etc.)  location descr: (remote sites)	block nbr: _____ lot nbr: _____ tax lot nbr: <u>R33236</u> 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>0</u>
elig. evaluation: <u>eligible/significant</u>	NR status: _____ (indiv listed only; see Grouping for hist dist)
primary constr date: <u>1955</u> (c.) <input type="checkbox"/> secondary date: <u>2008</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: _____	
primary style: <u>International</u>	prim style comments: <u>Fifties modern</u>
secondary style: _____	sec style comments: _____
primary siding: <u>Standard Brick</u>	siding comments: <u>Red brick</u>
secondary siding: <u>Metal: Other/Undefined</u>	
plan type: <u>School (General)</u>	architect: <u>Johnson, Hollis (main bldg)</u>
	builder: _____
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 &amp; Inventory Project</u>
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farmstead/cluster name: \_\_\_\_\_ external site #: 240  
(ID# used in city/agency database)

## SHPO INFO FOR THIS PROPERTY

NR date listed: \_\_\_\_\_  
ILS survey date: 7/8/2009  
RLS survey date: 7/8/2009  
Gen File date: \_\_\_\_\_

**106 Project(s)**



East and north elevation

## ARCHITECTURAL / PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

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

### Description Summary

The William Clark Elementary School is a one story brick veneer building designed in the International style. The campus consists of the 1955 single story brick-faced building that forms a modified h-shaped plan. The single-story brick wings that comprise the building are separated by a courtyard and form a variation on a finger plan type school. The building features International style elements such as a linear composition and an asymmetrical plan. In addition, bands of aluminum windows, flat roofs, overhangs, and a lack of ornamentation serves to reinforce the ideals of functionalism and minimalism.

### Architectural Description

The William Clark Elementary School is situated in the Montavilla neighborhood of East Portland at 1231 SE 92nd Avenue. The campus occupies a long, narrow parcel between SE 92nd Avenue on the east and SE 89th Avenue on the west. The school is located on the east end of the campus, and parking is to the north. Recreational facilities include play fields at the western end of the campus, and playgrounds at the south end of the campus. Berrydale Park is located immediately to the north of the school campus.

The 1955 William Clark Elementary School features an h-shaped, modified finger plan. Two wings of the school, oriented on a north-south axis, are connected by a central wing that is oriented east-west. The entrance foyer, administrative offices, cafeteria, and kitchen are located along the central wing. Rectangular classrooms are located along the double-loaded corridors within the east and west wings. At the north end of the west wing (or the top of the spine that forms the "H") is the gymnasium. An exterior courtyard is located between the two classrooms wings. Doorways, located at the end of the corridors and wings, provide access to the expansive school grounds.

The single story International style building is constructed of brick arranged in rows of three and four stretchers separated by headers. The horizontal emphasis is achieved through the long single story buildings that comprise the William Clark Elementary School, as well as the bands of metal hopper windows. The only vertical element is the brick and metal smoke stack. Glass block windows are located along the exterior walls of prominent public spaces such as the gymnasium and cafeteria. The building is capped by flat roofs and low sloped gable roofs at the cafeteria and gymnasium. All of the roofs feature metal caps along the parapet and narrow eaves. The primary entrance, which is located along the east (front) elevation, is recessed beneath the roof of the east wing. This entrance is marked by four metal doors with center lights and transoms. Secondary entrances, located at the end of corridors or building wings, are slightly recessed within the walls of the building. The building rests on a concrete foundation.

The principal entrance opens into a foyer that is located between two corridors. The main corridor extends east-west through the middle of the building. The corridor receives ample light from the windows that flank the entry doors and line the exterior walls that open into the courtyard. The double-loaded corridors feature varnished brick and rubber base moldings. Tubular fluorescent light fixtures are suspended from the acoustic tile clad ceiling. Flooring throughout the building consists of asphalt tile. The building is heated by boilers that are located off the west corridor. Metal heating units are located in the hallways and console units are located beneath classroom windows.

The primary public spaces for the building are centrally located around the entry door. The foyer, which is flanked by the administrative offices and faculty dining room, features wood surrounds, molding, and an elevated ceiling. The cafeteria, which is lighted with glass block windows, features birch tongue and groove boards along the walls and ceiling and wood ceiling beams. A stage, which gives additional functionality to use the space as an auditorium, is located at the west end of the cafeteria.

The gymnasium is located at the northwest side of the building, providing easy access to the playgrounds and playfields. The double height space features varnished brick walls and wood ceiling beams.

Classrooms feature birch doors with center lights. The classrooms are rectangular in plan with birch cupboards and closets located along one end of the room. Windows line the exterior walls of the classrooms. Additional storage cupboards are located beneath the window.

### Alterations/Integrity

Clark Elementary School retains a high degree of integrity. Additions include a small restroom facility within a storage room along the west corridor (1963) and the remodeling of several classrooms into a media center also along the west corridor (1988). In addition, the interior door windows were replaced with wire glass (1988) and corridor roll-up screens were welded in the "up" position so as not to block off sections of the building (1993) (Clark Facility Plan, Clark Facility Profile). These alterations have not affected the design, materials, workmanship and feeling associated with the 1955 William Clark Elementary 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

Built in 1955, the former William Clark Elementary School (now Creative Science 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 (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). Between 1934 and 1944 the increases in enrollment in schools near present-day Clark Elementary were noted as significant. The large percentage increases in student enrollment during this period were witnessed at Rigler (62%), Gregory Heights (57.3%), and Rose City Park (38%) (Portland Public Schools 1945:25). Beginning with the 1945 bond measure, the PPS embarked on an effort to improve its school facilities through renovations, additions, and 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 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 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).

The architect of the Creative Science School, Hollis Johnston, adopted the building program and principles that dominated the discourse for school design during the second half of the twentieth century. Hollis Johnson, a graduate of Jefferson High School in Portland and the University of Oregon Architecture School, was an experienced designer of schools and other public facilities. Johnston worked with several prominent architects including Lawrence & Holford and Sutton & Whitney before establishing a solo practice in 1930. During the depression Johnston served as chief consulting architect for the U.S. Corps of Engineers on the Bonneville Dam Project. He subsequently worked with Herman Brookman before founding the firm of Stanton & Johnston with A. Glenn Stanton. Work during this period included the design of military projects, structures for the new Lewis & Clark College Campus, and the Stadium Branch of the U.S. Nation Bank. After the War, Johnston reestablished his own practice. Johnston is known for his work on the Portland Town Club (1931- NRHP) by Johnson, Wallwork & Johnston, the Watson/Eastman house (1928-NRHP), the Joseph Gerber House, and the new Lincoln High School. In addition to William Clark Elementary, he designed Bridlemile Elementary (Ritz 2002: 214-215).

Creative Science School is a modified version of the finger plan type school that became popular in the post-war period. Similar to other schools of this type, Creative Science School features a single story h-shaped building with classrooms separated by courtyards. The construction utilized wood frame with brick veneer, which allowed for economic building and ease of expansion. Mass produced materials including aluminum windows and glass block, readily available after the conversion of the defense industries to manufacturing facilities, provide economical decoration.

Creative Science School retains excellent integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association with its plan and exterior and interior finishes. The 1955 International style influenced school is recommended as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) for its association with the PPS program of post-war construction. 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. While the school was designed by notable Portland architect Hollis Johnston, his design for Clark School is not considered a significant example of his work. However, the character defining floor plan and intact exterior and interior details of the school provides a good example of the International style influenced finger plan schools constructed during the post-war years. The Creative Science School is therefore 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: 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.

Perkins, Lawrence B and Walter D. Cocking. Schools. New York: Reinhold Publishing Corporation, 1949.

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

\_\_\_\_\_. Clark Elementary School. Facility Plan.

\_\_\_\_\_. Clark Elementary School. Facility Profile.

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



Main building (240A), east (front) and north (side) elevations, looking southwest.



Main building (240A), west (rear) and south (side) elevations, looking southeast.



Main building (240A), south (side) elevations and courtyard, looking north.



Main building (240A), north (side) elevation, looking south.



Main building (240A), west (side) elevation, looking north.



Main building (240A), entrance foyer, looking east.



Main building (240A), gymnasium, looking west.



Main building (240A), central hallway, looking west.



Main building (240A), original classroom closets, looking southwest

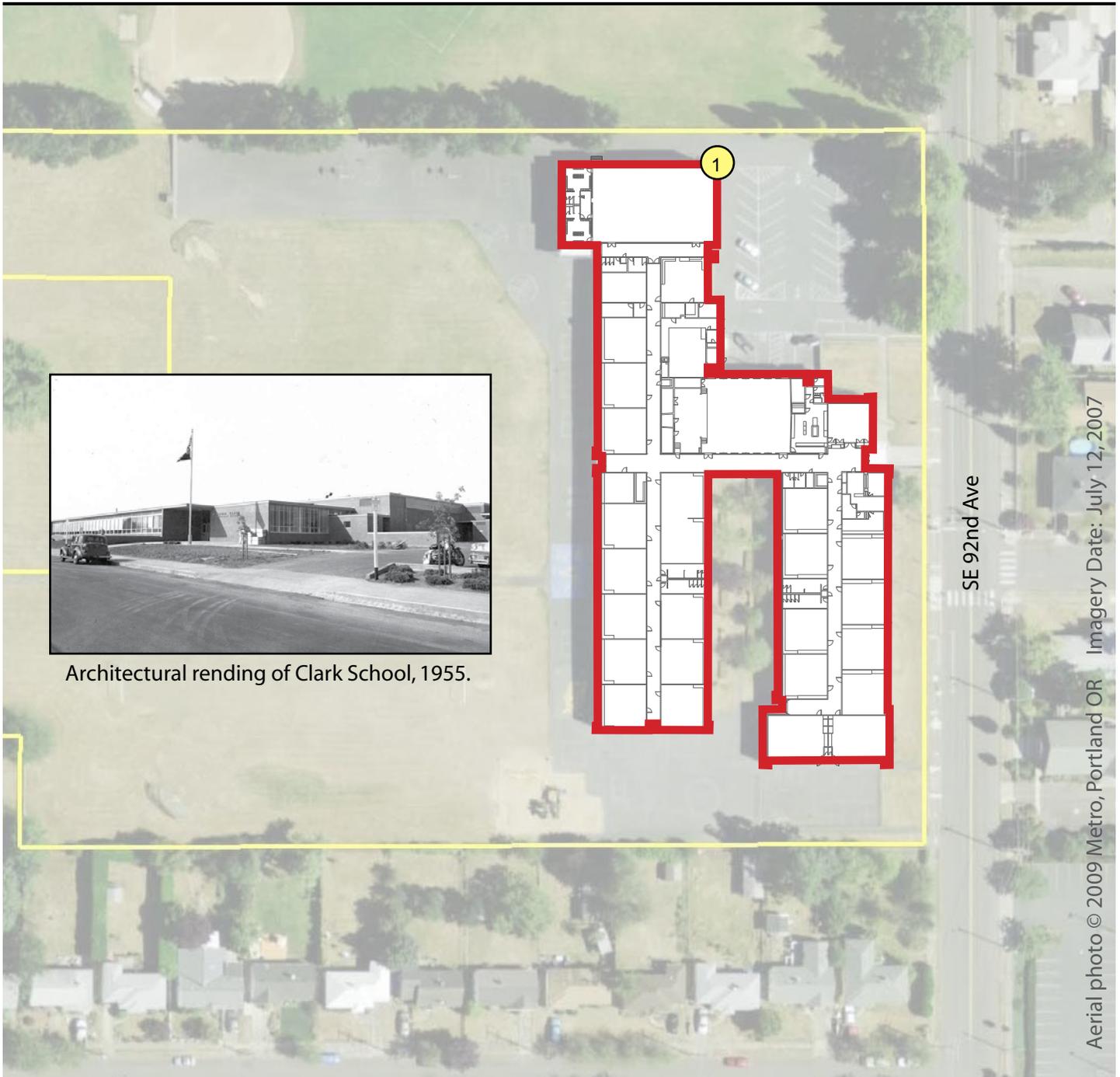


Main building (240 A), cafeteria/ multipurpose room, looking west.

# Creative Science School (Clark)

1231 NE 92nd Ave, Portland OR, 97216

[View Site in Google Maps](#)



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



Architectural rendering of Clark School, 1955.



### Historical Significance and Building Integrity

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

### Building Periods

1. Main Building (240A), 1955





CLARK ELEMENTARY - 240

1231 SE 92ND AVE 97216

PPS HISTORIC ASSESSMENT



DRAWING: ANNOTATED PLAN

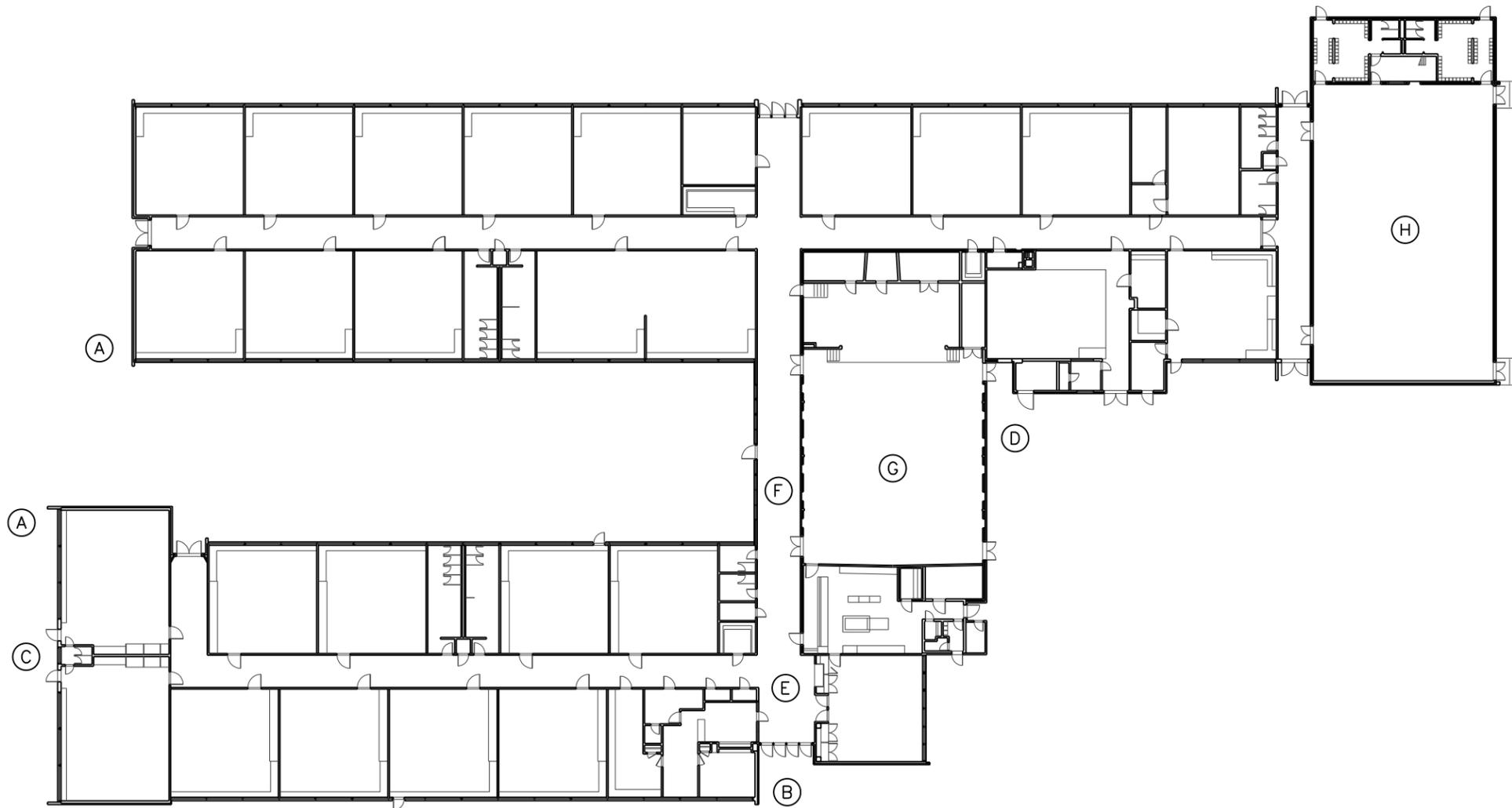
DATE: Sept. 4, 2009

KEYNOTES:

- (A) THE SINGLE-STORY WINGS COMPRISE AN H-SHAPED PLAN AND FORM A VARIATION ON A FINGER PLAN TYPE SCHOOL. THE WINGS FORM AN EXTERIOR COURTYARD.
- (B) THE PRIMARY ENTRANCE IS RECESSED BENEATH THE ROOF OF THE EAST WING.
- (C) SECONDARY ENTRANCES, LOCATED AT THE END OF CORRIDORS OR BUILDING WINGS, ARE SLIGHTLY RECESSED WITHIN THE WALLS OF THE BUILDING.
- (D) GLASS BLOCK WINDOWS ARE LOCATED ALONG THE EXTERIOR WALLS OF PROMINENT PUBLIC SPACES, SUCH AS THE GYMNASIUM AND CAFETERIA.
- (E) THE FOYER FEATURES VARNISHED BRICK WALLS, WOOD SURROUNDS, MOLDING, AND AN ELEVATED CEILING.
- (F) THE MAIN CORRIDOR IS ILLUMINATED BY WINDOWS THAT ARE LOCATED ALONG EXTERIOR WALLS THAT OPEN INTO THE COURTYARD.
- (G) THE CAFETERIA FEATURES TONGUE-AND-GROOVE BOARDS ALONG THE WALLS AND CEILING AND WOOD CEILING BEAMS.
- (H) THE GYMNASIUM FEATURES VARNISHED BRICK WALLS AND WOOD CEILING BEAMS.

GENERAL KEYNOTES:

- (1) INTERNATIONAL STYLE INFLUENCED ELEMENTS INCLUDE A LINEAR COMPOSITION, BANDS OF METAL WINDOWS, FLAT ROOFS, OVERHANGS, AND LACK OF ORNAMENTATION.
- (2) THE BUILDING IS CLAD IN BRICK ARRANGED IN ROWS OF THREE AND FOUR STRETCHERS SEPARATED BY A SINGLE HEADER.
- (3) THE CORRIDORS OF THE BUILDING FEATURE VARNISHED BRICK.



1 CLARK ELEMENTARY - 1ST FLOOR  
 SCALE: 1" = 40'-0"

