

Oregon Historic Site Form

Kelly School
9030 Cooper St
Portland, Multnomah County

LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME

address: 9030 SE Cooper St apprx. addr

historic name: Kelly School

Portland vcnty Multnomah County

current/
other names: Clinton Kelly Elementary School

Optional Information

assoc addresses:
(former addresses, intersections, etc.)

location descr:
(remote sites)

block nbr: SEC lot nbr: R99 tax lot nbr: R33661

township: _____ range: _____ section: _____ 1/4: _____

zip: _____

PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS

resource type: Building height (# stories): 1

total # eligible resources: 2 total # ineligible resources: 1

elig. evaluation: eligible/contributing

NR status: _____

primary constr date: 1952 (c.) secondary date: 1969 (c.)
(optional--use for major addns)

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

primary orig use: School

orig use comments: _____

secondary orig use: _____

primary style: Northwest Regional

prim style comments: Fifties modern

secondary style: _____

sec style comments: _____

primary siding: Standard Brick

siding comments: Red brick

secondary siding: _____

plan type: School (General)

architect: Edmundson, Donald

builder: _____

comments/notes:

GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS

survey project name or other grouping name: PPS Historic Building Assessment 2009 Survey & Inventory Project

farmstead/cluster name: _____ external site #: 258
(ID# used in city/agency database)

SHPO INFO FOR THIS PROPERTY

NR date listed: _____

ILS survey date: 6/22/2009

RLS survey date: 6/22/2009

Gen File date: _____

106 Project(s)



East elevation entry

ARCHITECTURAL / PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

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

Summary Description

Kelly Elementary School is located at 9030 SE Cooper Street in southeast Portland. The 9.30-acre campus consists of the primary school building built in 1952 with additional wings added in 1958 (258A), a detached portable classroom built in 1969 (258B), and a detached L-shaped building built in 1969 (258C). The finger plan type school incorporates an interior garden to provide maximum light and ventilation to the classrooms. The single story building rests on a poured concrete foundation. Cladding on the wood frame building consists of a mixture of brick, board-and-batten, and stone. Moderately sloped butterfly and shed roofs cover the irregular mass of the building. Fenestration consists of grouped metal frame windows.

Architectural Description

Kelly Elementary School is located at 9030 SE Cooper Street in southeast Portland. The school's 9.30-acre campus is located at the southeast corner of Glenwood Park. Development in the neighborhood consists primarily of single family residences built between 1950-2000. The campus consists of the primary school building built in 1952 with additional wings added in 1958 (258A), a detached portable classroom built in 1969 (258B), and a detached L-shaped building built in 1965 (258C). Asphalt covered parking and play areas surround the school buildings. Play fields occupy the northwest portion of the parcel.

The main mass of the school is U-shaped with an additional wing that extends to the west (added 1958, 1964). The single story building rests on a poured concrete foundation. The finger plan type school incorporates an interior garden to provide maximum light and ventilation to the classrooms. Cladding on the wood frame building consists of a mixture of brick, board and batten, and stone. Moderately sloped butterfly and shed roofs cover the irregular mass of the building. The double height volume of the gymnasiums is further distinguished by a barrel vault. Fenestration consists of grouped metal frame windows.

The primary entry to the building is at the northeast corner. Double loaded corridors provide access to various wings of the school. The administrative offices are located immediately adjacent to the entry. Tubular fluorescent lighting fixtures are suspended from the ceilings. The ceiling in the east wing corridors appears to have been lowered. Flooring consists of a mixture of 6" x 6" and 12" x 12" tile, carpet, and hardwood.

Public spaces in the building consist of the cafeteria and gymnasium. Located immediately opposite the entry, the flat ceiling of the cafeteria is supported by a frame of glulam beams. Located at the northwest corner of the school, the double height volume of the gymnasium is supported by a barrel vault. The walls of the gymnasium feature exposed brick, concrete block, and tongue and groove decking.

The classrooms are primarily square or rectangular with built-in cabinetry on the walls opposite and adjacent to the windows. The classroom windows feature an operable awning window beneath a group of three fixed-frame windows. The kindergarten rooms flank a shared interior restroom.

Alterations/Integrity

Since the construction of Kelly Elementary School in 1952 there have been moderate alterations to the building or campus. The south wing of the primary building was extended in 1955 to provide space for two additional classrooms. The north wing was extended in 1958 to create two additional classrooms and again in 1964 to create 3 additional classrooms. The Music/ Industrial Arts building was added in 1965. In 1969 the detached classroom building was added at the southeast corner of the campus to serve as a school for deaf children. Alterations to the interior include replacing the floor tiles in 1982, remodeling the library in 1987, alterations to accommodate offices in 1987, and an upgrade to the boiler in 2006 (Portland Facility Profile). The ceiling of the east corridor appears to have been lowered. Despite the modest alterations, Kelly Elementary School retains a high level of historical integrity. The additions to the building maintained the original finger-plan. The major of the community spaces, cladding, and fenestration are intact.

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 1952, Kelly 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 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 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 Architects Collective – led by Walter Gropius, 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, and aluminum. In many buildings, architects achieved flexibility through the building's structure by employing non-load-bearing partitions 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, a practice employed by the architects of the early twentieth century schools, designers turned away from the two-story schools with centralized massing as well as the period revival styles popularized by Naramore and 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 featured interior courtyards, another hallmark of the Northwest style, which facilitated access to the outdoors and expanded the opportunities for passive ventilation and daylighting.

In response to the growing population of southeast Portland, the district acquired land on SE Cooper Street for \$28,529.36. The school was constructed in 1952 for \$589,468.83. The school was first occupied in 1953 (Portland Chronology Binder). The south wing of the primary building was extended in 1955 to provide space for 2 additional classrooms. The north wing was extended in 1958 to create two additional classrooms and again in 1964 to create 3 additional classrooms. The Music/ Industrial Arts building was added in 1965. In 1969 the detached classroom building was added at the southeast corner of the campus to serve as a school for deaf children. In 1980 and 1982 fires damaged the home economics room and several classrooms (Oregonian, 09-05-1982). Alterations to the interior include replacing the floor tiles in 1982, remodeling the library in 1987, alterations to accommodate offices in 1987, and an upgrade to the boiler in 2006 (Portland Facility Profile). The ceiling of the east corridors appears to have been lowered.

The architect of Kelly Elementary School had considerable experience in the design of public buildings from his nearly 30 years of architectural practice in the Portland area. A native of Oregon, Donald Edmundson graduated from Salem High School before attending North Pacific Evangelistic School and classes at the University of Oregon Extension School. In the mid-1920s Edmundson gained experience in the office of Houghtaling & Dougan, the architects of Washington High School. During World War II he worked for the Vancouver Housing Authority. From 1943-1953 Edmundson worked independently until he formed a partnership with Neil R. Kochendoerfer. The firm added Evan Kennedy, as engineer to the partnership Edmundson, Kochendoerfer & Kennedy in 1962. Edmundson is listed as the sole architect of Kelly School, Columbia School, and an addition to Cleveland High School. With Neil Kochendoerfer he designed Wilson High School. During Kennedy's tenure, the firm also designed the gymnasium addition for Cleveland High School. Other important projects designed by the firm were Morgan's Alley and O'Bryant Park in Portland and hospitals in the Dalles, Hood River, and Pendleton, Oregon (Ritz 2003: 122).

A good example of the finger plan type school that retains its integrity with its floor plan and many exterior and interior finishes intact, Kelly Elementary School is recommended as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The school was built in response to the residential development in southeast Portland during the PPS program of post-war construction and is eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A. Although designed by a successful architecture firm in Portland, archival research does not indicate that the school was a major commission. However, the building is a good example of the use of finger plan schools to facilitate rapid construction of the new buildings after World War II. The building's cantilevered entry, courtyard, distinctive roof forms, and variety of cladding materials are all elements of the Northwest Regional style; therefore, the building 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 checked="" 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

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.

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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.
Oregonian. "Arson Delays School Opening." 09-05-1982.

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 Superintendent, 1945.

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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.

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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.

Snyder, Eugene E. *Portland Names and Neighborhoods. Their Historic Origins*. Portland: Binford & Mort Publishing; 1st edition 1979.



East elevation facing northwest



Courtyard



East elevation entry



Gymnasium west elevation



North elevation addition

**Clinton Kelly School
Exterior Photos
ENTRIX, 2009**



Gymnasium facing west



Cafetorium facing west



Classroom built-in



Corridor facing south

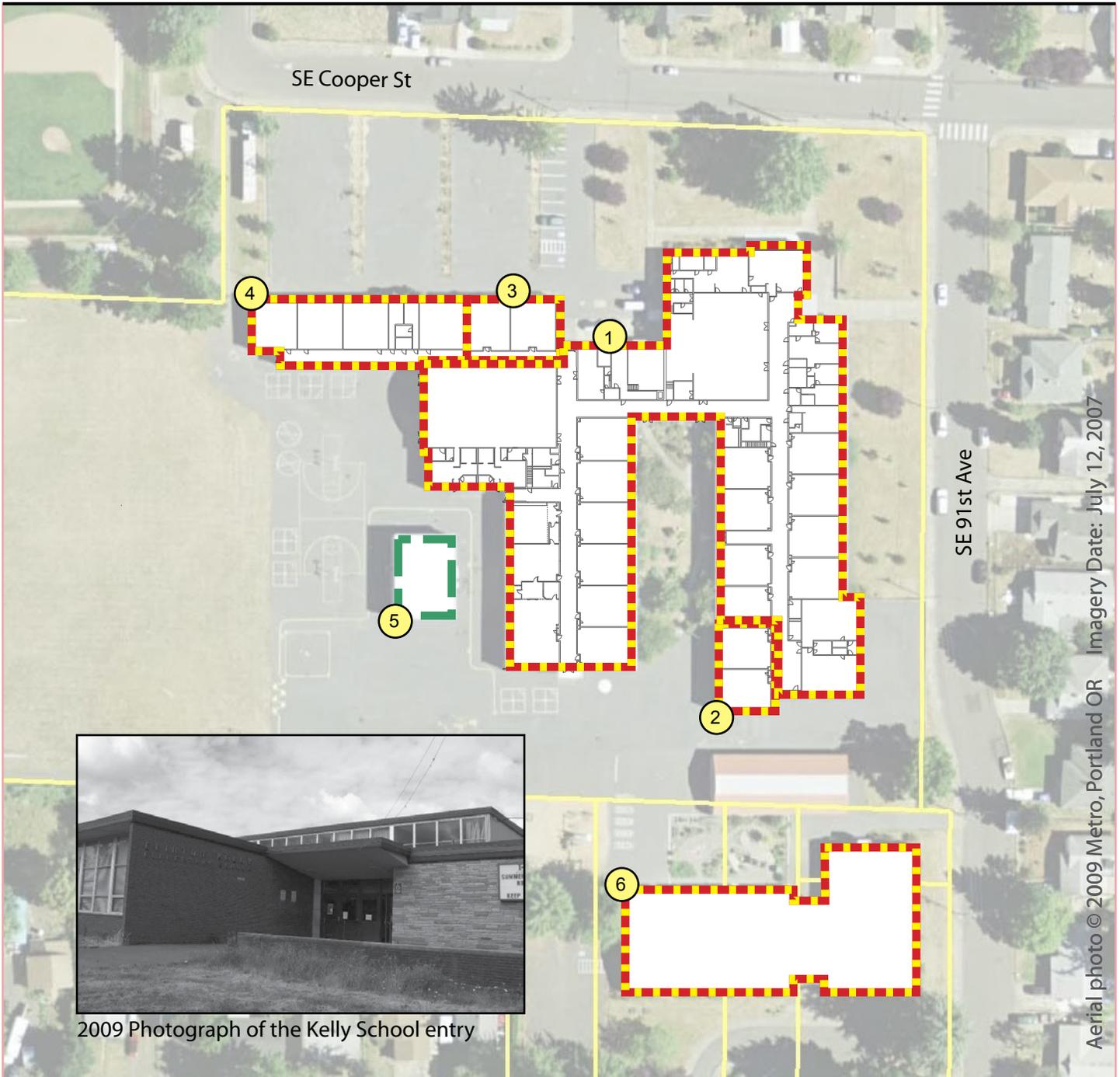


Media Center

Kelly School

9030 SE Cooper St, Portland OR, 97226

[View Site in Google Maps](#)



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



2009 Photograph of the Kelly School entry



Historical Significance and Building Integrity

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



Building Periods

1. Original Building (258A), 1952
2. Addition (258A), 1955
3. Addition (258A), 1958
4. Addition (258A), 1964
5. Addition (258B), 1969
6. Addition (258C), 1969