

Oregon Historic Site Form

Lent School
5105 97th Ave
Portland, Multnomah County

LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME

address: 5105 SE 97th Ave apprx. addr

Portland vcnty Multnomah County

Optional Information
 assoc addresses:
 (former addresses, intersections, etc.)
 location descr:
 (remote sites)

historic name: Lent School

current/
 other names: Oliver P. Lent Elementary School

block nbr: _____ lot nbr: _____ tax lot nbr: _____
 township: _____ range: _____ section: _____ 1/4: _____
 zip: _____

PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS

resource type: Building height (# stories): 1

elig. evaluation: not eligible/non-contributing

primary constr date: 1949 (c.) secondary date: 1963 (c.)
 (optional--use for major addns)

primary orig use: School

secondary orig use: _____

primary style: International

secondary style: _____

primary siding: Standard Brick

secondary siding: Poured Concrete

plan type: School (General)

total # eligible resources: 0 total # ineligible resources: 4

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

orig use comments: _____

prim style comments: _____

sec style comments: _____

siding comments: _____

architect: Jacobberger Stanton & Zeller

builder: _____

comments/notes: Main classroom building (266A), annex (266B), and two portables (266P1 and 266P2) are not contributing (not eligible).

GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS

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

farmstead/cluster name: _____ external site #: 266
 (ID# used in city/agency database)

SHPO INFO FOR THIS PROPERTY

NR date listed: _____

ILS survey date: 6/9/2009

RLS survey date: 6/9/2009

Gen File date: _____

106 Project(s)



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ARCHITECTURAL / PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

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

Description Summary

Situated in the Lents neighborhood of east Portland, the Oliver P. Lent Elementary School campus consists of primary classroom building (266A), an annex (266B), and two portable buildings (266P1 and 266P2). The primary building is a single story brick structure ornamented by detailed brick work and roofs clad in copper panels. Aluminum frame windows provide the fenestration. Double loaded corridors provide access to the classroom wings that are located at the north and south wings of the building.

Architectural Description

Oliver P. Lent Elementary School (266A) is situated in the Lents neighborhood of east Portland at 5105 SE 97th Avenue. The neighborhood consists of a mixture of single family residences built primarily between 1950 and 2000 (Sanborn Maps 1924-1928, Sanborn Map updated to 1950). The primary entrance to the facility is from SE 97th Street. Play areas and an open space that occupy the western edge of the campus provide a buffer between the school and Interstate 205.

The school facility, oriented on a north-south axis, consists of a long narrow main building that houses the primary administrative, classroom, and gathering spaces. Entry to the building is marked by a copper covered canopy that projects from the double height lobby space. The lobby, flanked by office spaces, fronts a triple height auditorium on the west side of the building. Covered by a series of flat and hipped roofs, the auditorium space divides the building bilaterally. The gymnasium projects slightly to the west from the north end of the building. A smaller projection at the south end of the building houses the cafeteria. Playground areas lie between the wings of the building. A detached annex, located to the southwest of the primary building provides additional classroom space. Two detached portable buildings occupy the north end of the parcel.

The single story buildings that comprise the campus rest on poured concrete foundations. The primary cladding material is brick laid in an all stretcher pattern separated by bands of soldier courses below the windows and a band of billet squares below the roofline. A flat roof masked by a parapet, trimmed in copper panels, covers the main building. The roof extends beyond the wall to furnish protection from the rain and shading for the classroom spaces. The basic unit of fenestration for the main building consists of a six- light aluminum frame window arranged in groups of three. The windows are comprised of two fixed frame windows above with a two-light awning window below. Also clad in brick, the classroom addition is covered by a metal covered gable roof with projecting hip roofs on the east and west elevations. The portable at the north edge of campus features board-and-batten siding and a gable roof. Built from concrete block, the adjacent shop building is covered by a flat roof.

The principal entry opens into a lobby illuminated by walls of windows that flank the entry door and the ribbon windows that line the clerestory. Stainless steel metal tiles and bands, set between the clerestory and entry doors, provide additional architectural elaboration. Exposed brick, extensively patterned with bands of soldier courses and header courses provides the decoration for the entry to the auditorium. Double loaded corridors, lined with a ceramic tile wainscot, extend to the north and south providing access to the classrooms. Tubular fluorescent light fixtures are suspended from the acoustic tile clad ceiling. Flooring consists of linoleum tiles. Wood doors with transom windows provide access to the classrooms from the hallway.

The classrooms feature an L-shaped plan with a recessed area that features a sink, work counters, and base cabinets. Additional built-in cabinetry for storing coats is recessed in the interior wall. The cabinetry retains its folding panel wood doors. The windows that line the exterior wall on the west elevation retain their wood surrounds. Each classroom includes a secondary door to provide egress to the outdoors.

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

Within ten years of the construction of the original building, the annex classroom building (266B) was added to the southwest portion of the school property. Other additions include the construction of a portable shop building (266P2) and a second portable classrooms building (266P1) in 1966. Alterations include the exterior door replacement in 1989, replacement of the floor tiles in 1992, and lighting changes for energy conservation in 1995. Other alterations include remodels to various rooms including the home economics room (1987), industrial arts room (1987), and to the roof, classrooms, and hallway, and auditorium finishes in 2004 after a fire damaged the auditorium and classroom wing.

Lent Elementary retains a high to moderate degree of integrity. Modest additions and portables are located on the rear of the building. The building retains its original brick cladding, aluminum windows, and roof paneling and form. The configuration of the corridors, primary spaces, and classroom design are intact except for the modifications noted above. Although the flooring, ceiling tiles, and lighting have been changed, other interior finishes including the tile wainscot in the corridors, wood window surrounds, and classroom built-ins 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 1953, Oliver P. Lent Elementary 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.

Once a small crossroads community on the outskirts of Portland, Lents was originally settled by Oliver P. Lent around 1866. Platted for subdivision by Lent in 1892, the community was eventually annexed by the City of Portland in 1912 (MacColl 1979: 106). Originally named for this early pioneer settler who settled in the vicinity of the school, Lent Elementary was built to replace an earlier (1910) two story frame school located to the southwest on a property deemed too small and that contained inadequate facilities for its students (Portland Public Schools 1945: 55; Snyder 1979: 239; PPS School Chronology Binder, np). Marked for replacement as early as 1925, the 1910 school received a minimum of upgrades and residents complained from the 1930s to the late 1940s of the school's unsafe condition (Oregonian 12-14-1947). Finally, a larger new site was found and funding was provided for a new facility (Oregon Journal 03-19-1950). The new site was pushed further to the suburban fringe of the City in anticipation of a growing population of school-age children. The old school property was sold to the PAL Club in 1951 and the old building was subsequently demolished (PPS School Chronology Binder).

For the new building program, PPS 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).

The architects of Lent School, Jacobberger Stanton & Zeller, adopted the building program and principles that dominated the discourse for school design during the second half of the twentieth century. Founded by Francis Jacobberger in 1930, the firm grew out of practice originally established by his father Joseph Jacobberger. Francis Jacobberger took on partners Ekmer Zeller and John Stanton in the mid-1940s. The firm's primary client, the Catholic Church commissioned the Jacobberger firm to design Providence Hospital, Central Catholic High School, Mount. St. Joseph Home for the aged and a number of churches. The firm also designed the Portland University Engineering Building (Ritz 2003: 205-206). Lent Elementary school is the firm's sole building for PPS.

For the design of Lent Elementary School, the Jacobberger firm employed an adaptation of the finger plan school that became popular in the post-war period (Ogata 2008: 567). Although the Lent plan is more linear and symmetrical than the majority of school buildings of this type, the relationship of the 1958 annex to the building central spine, result in a similar form. Additionally, the interstitial spaces created by the annex and the projecting auditorium and gymnasium result in the strong connections between indoor and outdoor spaces throughout the building that was central to the finger plan school design. The construction, wood frame with brick veneer, provided for economic building and ease of expansion. Utilization of mass produced materials readily available due to the conversion of the defense plants to manufacturing facilities after World War II included aluminum for the window frames and glassblock which provided economical means of lighting classrooms.

Although Lent Elementary School retains excellent integrity with its floor plan and many exterior and interior finishes intact, it is not recommended as eligible for the NRHP. The school was built during the PPS program of post-war construction but archival research does not indicate that it influenced the design of other school buildings, the curriculum, or future planning for the schools, therefore, it is not eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A. The Lent campus plan is not a strong example of the planning principles that characterized the design of schools of the mid-twentieth century. Although designed by a prominent architecture firm in Portland, archival research does not indicate that the school was a major commission or characteristic of their work. The ornamental brickwork and copper roof cladding, while handsome, is unusually decorative for the period and does not represent a good example of mid-twentieth century architectural design that 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

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Bibliography: MacColl, E. Kimbark. *The Growth of a City: Power and Politics in Portland, Oregon 1915-1950*. Portland, Oregon: The Georgian Press, 1979.

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, "Lents Poorest Relation of Portland Schools As Need for New Building Goes Unrealized", 12-14-1947.

Oregon Journal, "Lents Students Already Eager for New School Opening," 03-19-1950.

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.

_____. *School Chronology Binder*. PPS Archives, Portland, Oregon.

_____. *Atkinson 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.

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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, Oregon: Binford and Mort, 1979.



East elevation facing west



East elevation facing southwest



Southwest elevation facing northeast



Addition facing southwest



Brickwork facing north



Corridor facing south



Classroom facing east



Gymnasium facing west



Corridor doors and brickwork



Entry facing south

Lent School

5105 SE 97th Ave, Portland OR, 97266

[View Site in Google Maps](#)

Building Periods

1. Main Building (266A), 1948
2. Annex Building (266B), 1958
3. Portable Classrooms (266P1), 1966
4. Portable Shop (266P2), 1966



2009 photograph of the Lent School near the main entrance.

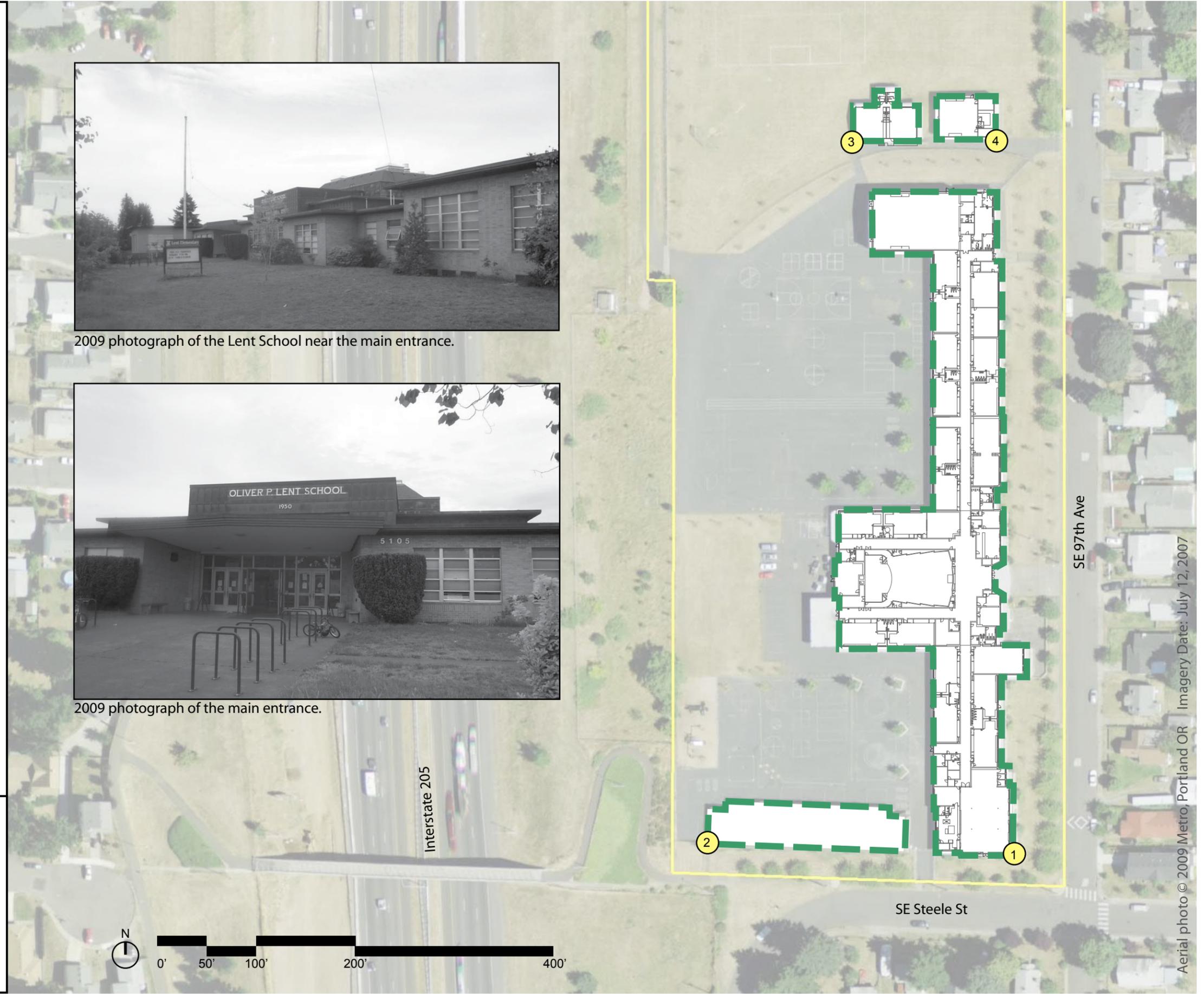


2009 photograph of the main entrance.



Historical Significance and Building Integrity

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



SE 97th Ave

SE Steele St

Interstate 205