

Oregon Historic Site Form

Rieke School
1405 Vermont St
Portland, Multnomah County

LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME

address: <u>1405 SW Vermont St</u> <input type="checkbox"/> apprx. addr	historic name: <u>Rieke School</u>
<u>Portland</u> <input type="checkbox"/> vcnty <u>Multnomah County</u>	current/ other names: <u>Mary Rieke Elementary School, Wilson Park 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: _____ total # ineligible resources: <u>3</u>
elig. evaluation: <u>not eligible/non-contributing</u>	NR status: _____ (indiv listed only; see Grouping for hist dist)
primary constr date: <u>1961</u> (c.) <input type="checkbox"/> secondary date: _____ (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>Steel</u>	architect: <u>Scott and Payne</u>
secondary siding: _____	builder: _____
plan type: <u>School (General)</u>	
comments/notes:	

GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS

survey project name or other grouping name	<u>PPS Historic Building Assessment 2009</u>	<u>Survey & Inventory Project</u>
farmstead/cluster name:		external site #: <u>183</u> (ID# used in city/agency database)

SHPO INFO FOR THIS PROPERTY

NR date listed: _____
ILS survey date: 7/10/2009
RLS survey date: 7/10/2009
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

Rieke Elementary School is located at 1405 SW Vermont St. in the Hillsdale neighborhood of southwest Portland. The 7.2 acre property includes the main school building (1959, 183A), a multi-purpose building (1968, 183B), a playshed (1977, no number), and a portable (2007, no number). The one story building reflects International style influences through its horizontal appearance, glazed curtain walls, low sloping butterfly roof, and wide overhanging eaves.

Architectural Description

Rieke Elementary School is situated in the Hillsdale neighborhood of southwest Portland. The 7.2 acre property is bounded by the Wilson High School property to the east, Vermont St. to the south, SW Bertha Blvd. to the west, and commercial strip development to the north. The school occupies the south side of the lot along Vermont St. and is well shaded by trees to the south. Development in the surrounding area consists primarily of single family residences built between 1950 and 1990 (www.portlandmaps.com). Playing fields are largely located to the north of the school.

Constructed of a lightweight metal frame, the one story Rieke School was built starting in 1959. The exterior skin on the north and south sides of the building is attached to six-inch steel studs and consists of plate glass windows with moveable hopper windows atop insulated panels and vents. The east and west gable ends, meanwhile, are sheathed with all stretcher bond brick that cover concrete block walls. A double butterfly roof is visible on the east gable end, but is not visible on the west gable end. Louvers in the gable end ventilate the building's loft. A wide eave, supported by exposed steel beams, shades both the north and south sides of the building. Although no eave is visible on the building, the cornice of the building is covered with vertical seam metal. The width of the building is achieved by anchoring the metal roof truss to the two interior corridor walls that are constructed of concrete block with steel columns.

The building features a simplified version of the finger plan with one long double loaded corridor within a single finger or wing. A lobby is accessed through the north entry. The entry, which is recessed into the building, is supported by a series of steel columns attached to the exposed steel purlins. A set of glazed metal doors provides entry into a small foyer which connects to a corridor that extends east to west through the entire building. Another exit door extends from the corridor to the north thus forming a rough T-plan.

The classrooms are rectangular and feature built-in wood cabinetry and coat hooks on the interior walls providing acoustic barriers between the classrooms. The slope of the ceilings follows that of the butterfly roof and the steel purlins are visible. Acoustic panels positioned between the purlins also assist in dampening sound. Tubular fluorescent light fixtures are suspended from the classroom ceilings. Flooring largely consists of 12" by 12" linoleum floor tiles.

Alterations/Integrity

There have been moderate alterations to the school building and grounds since its construction in 1959. The alterations include the construction of a detached multi-purpose building (183B) to the north of the main school building in 1968. Two classrooms were subsequently added to the multipurpose building in 1969. A detached playshed was also added in 1976. Another portable classroom was added in 2007.

HISTORY

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

Statement of Significance

Originally called the Wilson Park Elementary School as well as Wilson Elementary, the Rieke School was constructed in 1959 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 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).

In response to the growing population of southwest Portland and to relieve crowding in other neighborhood schools, PPS began planning for the Rieke School as early as 1949 when it acquired the tract that would eventually become the site of the school and the nearby Wilson High School. The property was acquired for \$34,250. Named after the nearby neighborhood Wilson Park (and subsequently named Woodrow Wilson Elementary), the school was designed by the architectural firm Scott and Payne whose plans called for it to be a primary school that could be expanded into a full elementary school (PPS Architectural Drawing Archives; Oregonian 2-19-1961). The new school cost \$328,101 to construct (PPS Chronology Binder). The school was occupied by 1961 (Oregonian 2-19-1961). In 1978-1979, the school name was changed in remembrance of Mary W. Rieke, a three

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term PPS Board member and former Oregon legislator (PPS Chronology Binder). In 1984, amidst declining enrollment, the school was closed only to reopen in 1992 as an elementary school.

A native of Spokane, Washington, James Payne attended the University of Washington before relocating to Portland. After Payne's arrival in Portland around 1944, he worked for Van Evera Bailey until 1947. He subsequently worked with Roi Morin until 1949 when he joined the firm of Wick, Hilgers & Scott. In 1951, Payne obtained his architecture license and established a partnership with Gerry Scott. Scott is best known for his work with Wick, Hilgers & Scott as the architect of record for John Yeon's Portland Visitors Information Center of 1945. The firm of Scott & Payne continued until the 1970s. Best known for his work on hospitals, Payne was the architect of Seaside Hospital, Portland Osteopathic Hospital, and Redmond Hospital. In addition to work for Concordia College, Payne and Scott designed Hollyrood Elementary School and the first wing of Smith Elementary School (Ritz 2003: 310).

Although the Rieke School retains its integrity with its floor plan and many of the 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 schools buildings, the curriculum, or future planning for the school. The school is therefore not eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A. The architectural firm of Scott and Payne are known designers in the City of Portland in the late 1950s, but their influence in the design of post-war schools appears minimal. In comparison with other schools built in Portland during the post war period, the plan, utilization of materials, and massing is a simple and not as strong an example of the finger plan type schools erected in Portland in the 1950s and 1960s. The Rieke School, therefore, is not 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.

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 Superintendent, 1945.

_____. *Portland Public Schools Chronology Binder*.

_____. *Portland Public Schools Architectural Drawing Archives*.

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

Sanborn Map Company

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 of main building (183A).



View of multi-purpose building, looking southeast (183B).



South elevation, detail of banks of windows (183A).



Playshed, looking southwest (no #).



View of main building looking southeast (183A).

**Rieke School
Exterior Photos
ENTRIX, 2009**



View of library.



View of boilers



Typical corridor.



View of main foyer.

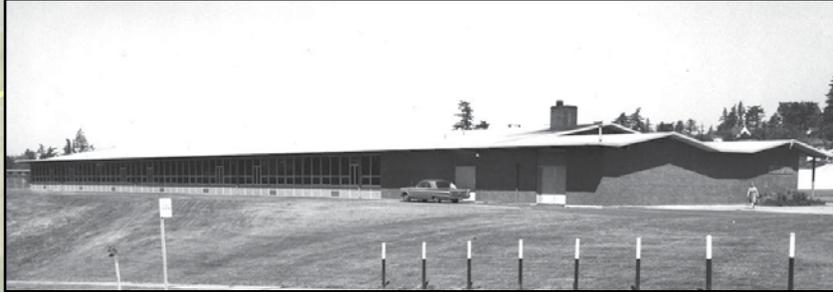


Typical classroom with built-ins and exposed steel roof purlins.

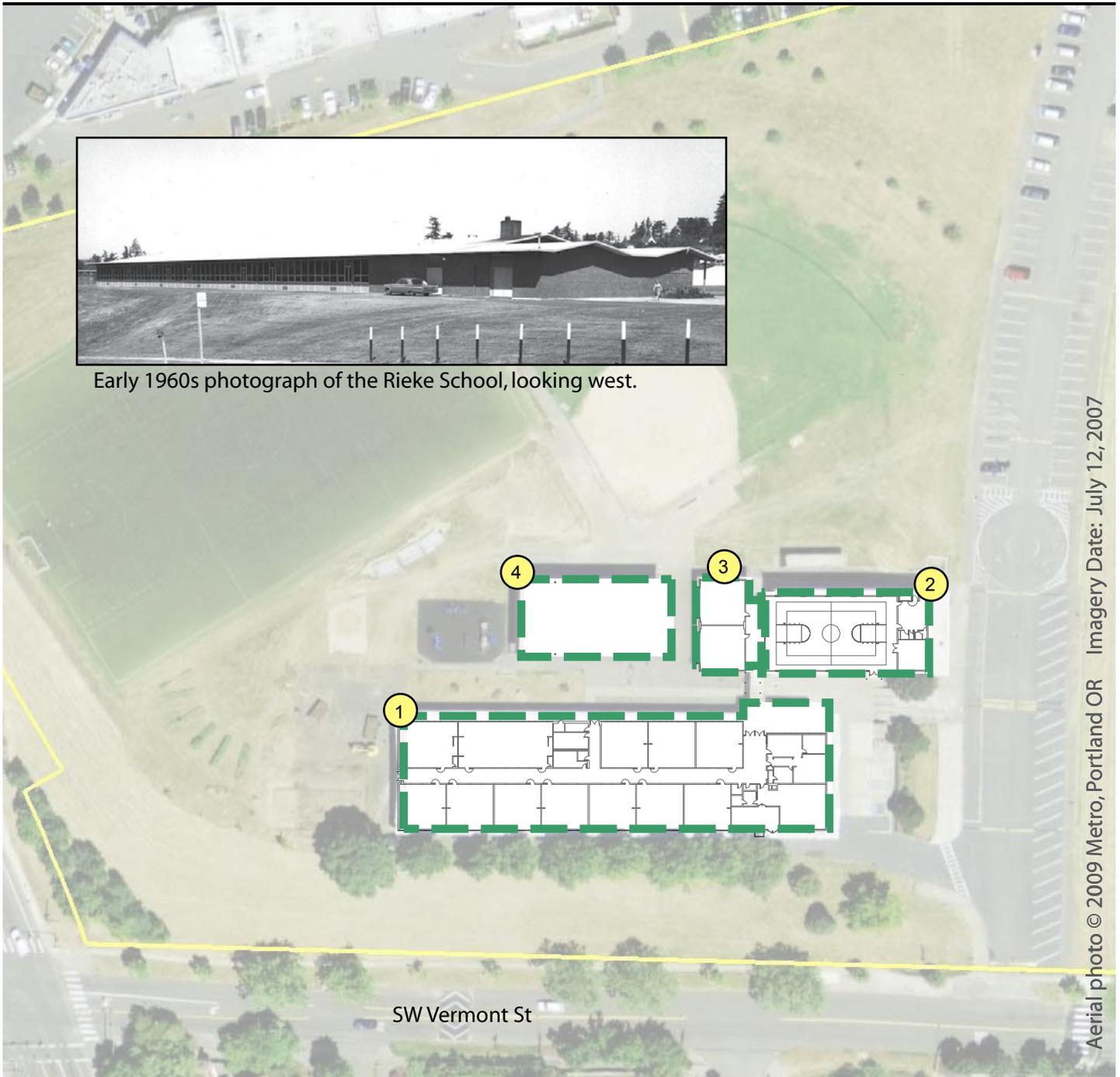
Rieke School

1405 SW Vermont St, Portland OR, 97219

[View Site in Google Maps](#)



Early 1960s photograph of the Rieke School, looking west.



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 (183A), 1959
2. Classroom Add (183B), 1968
3. Classroom Add (183B), 1969
4. Play Shed, 1977

