

Oregon Historic Site Form

Tubman School
2231 Flint
Portland, Multnomah County

LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME

address: 2231 N Flint appr. addr

Portland vcnty Multnomah County

historic name: Tubman School

current/
other names: Harriet Tubman Leadership Academy for Young Women, Jefferson Academy for Young Women, Eliot Elementary School

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: Building height (# stories): 2

elig. evaluation: not eligible/non-contributing

primary constr date: 1952 (c.) secondary date: 1983 (c.)
(optional--use for major addns)

primary orig use: School

secondary orig use: _____

primary style: International

secondary style: _____

primary siding: Standard Brick

secondary siding: Concrete: Other/Undefined

plan type: School (General)

total # eligible resources: 0 total # ineligible resources: 2

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: Burns, Bear, McNeil & Schneider

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 #: _____
(ID# used in city/agency database)

SHPO INFO FOR THIS PROPERTY

NR date listed: _____

ILS survey date: 7/9/2009

RLS survey date: 7/9/2009

Gen File date: _____

106 Project(s)



Commons within 1983 addition, looking north

ARCHITECTURAL / PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

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

Description Summary

The Harriet Tubman Leadership Academy for Young Women (originally Eliot Elementary School) is a two story brick veneer building designed in the International style. The campus consists of the original L-shaped building built in 1952 (199A) and 1983 ribbed concrete additions (199B) that are located along the east (front) and west (rear) elevations of the building. The Brutalist styled addition is connected to the original building creating a modified rectangular plan. A rectangular concrete building is located to the north of the primary facility, and the two facilities are connected via a covered breezeway (199C). The original building features a linear composition and asymmetrical plan. These International style elements, in addition to the bands of aluminum windows, low sloped roofs, overhangs, and a lack of ornamentation, serve to reinforce the ideals of functionalism and minimalism.

Architectural Description

The Harriet Tubman Leadership Academy for Young Women (originally Eliot Elementary) is situated in the Eliot neighborhood of East Portland at 2231 N Flint Avenue. The neighborhood consists of a mix of commercial, industrial, and single and multi family residences. The campus occupies an irregular shaped parcel that is bound on the north by Lillis Albina Park, on the east by N. Flint Avenue, on the south by commercial buildings, and on the west by Interstate 5. The school is located on the south end of the campus and an industrial arts building is located to the north. Parking is provided along the south, west, and north sides of the building and play areas are provided in Lillis Albina Park to the north.

The Tubman campus features the original 1952 modified L-shaped plan (199A) and 1983 addition filling (199B) in the L shape. The central spine of the L shaped building is oriented on a north-south axis that runs parallel to N Flint Avenue. Administrative offices and classrooms are located along the main north-south corridor. Within the northwest wing of the building, which is sited on an east-west axis, are the library, gymnasium, offices, and additional classrooms. A two story addition (1983) was added between the south and west elevations of the building, which enclosed the L-shape, forming a modified rectangular plan. The addition provided space for new uses including a cafeteria located on the ground floor and additional classrooms located within the second story mezzanine.

The two-story International style building is constructed of reinforced concrete with brick veneer. The building features a linear composition, which is achieved through a series of long two story wings. The horizontal massing of the building is emphasized by the flat roofs with metal coping along the parapet. Fixed and hopper aluminum sash windows further accentuate the horizontal building. The Brutalist styled additions, which were added along the west (rear) and east (front) elevations of the main building, are constructed of concrete. The concrete additions buildings break up the horizontal massing of the building. All of the wings that comprise the Tubman campus rest on concrete foundations.

The primary entrance, which is located along the east (front) elevation, is recessed within the ribbed concrete walls of the one story rectangular addition. This addition features a shed roof that is covered in ribbed aluminum. The entrance is marked by two sets of metal doors with side lights and transom windows. Secondary entrances feature metal doors with center lights and transom windows.

The principal entrance opens into a small foyer which is lighted by the skylights and transom windows over the primary entrance. Along the southwest end of the building is the cafeteria and commons. The west (rear) elevation of the original 1952 red brick building forms the east wall of the commons area. The commons area is lighted by clerestory windows, and features concrete posts which support the mezzanine level of the 1983 (199B) addition. To the north of the cafeteria and commons is the original gymnasium. The new gymnasium, which is located along the west side of the building, features concrete ceiling beams supported by brackets and glass block windows on the east and west (side) walls. The library, located in the northeast corner of the building (originally the auditorium/cafeteria) features a mezzanine along the west end of the room and a reception area lit by skylights along the east end of the room.

The double-loaded corridor features smooth plaster walls and a rubber base. Tubular fluorescent light fixtures are suspended from the acoustic tile clad ceiling of the original building; fluorescent light fixtures are recessed within the paneled ceilings in the 1983 building. Flooring consists of vinyl asphalt tile and carpet. Classrooms in the original 1952 building are rectangular in plan and feature a recessed cupboard and closet area along one wall. The rooms feature smooth plaster walls with a rubber base molding. Classroom doors are wood with rectangular lights. The building is heated by boilers that are located at the northwest corner of the building. Metal heating units are located in the hallways and console units are located beneath classroom windows.

A 1983 (199C) square concrete building is located to the north of the primary facility. This building is covered in precast concrete panels and constructed into the south bank of the Lillis Albina Park. The building was originally constructed with an open interior plan which has since been modified and is now occupied by the athletics office. It is connected to the main facility via a covered breezeway. The breezeway features an exposed metal truss system and a flat roof covered in ribbed aluminum.

Alterations/Integrity

Tubman has been extensively modified over time to meet the evolving needs of Portland Public Schools. From 1980 to 1985 the facility was closed to undergo additions and interior renovations. Three additions were added to the campus, which feature ribbed concrete panels and ribbed aluminum roofing. A two-story building was constructed between the south and west elevations of the original L-shaped building. A single-story building was constructed along the east (front) elevation at the main entrance. A square industrial arts building was added to the north of the primary facility and a covered breeze way was constructed to connect the two facilities. Other alterations include the reconfiguration of the auditorium/cafeteria into administrative office space and a media center. The exterior walls of the auditorium/cafeteria were punched out to provide additional interior space. In addition, within classrooms the original doors and sinks were replaced and the wainscot was removed (PPS Facility Plans). These alterations greatly altered the design, materials, workmanship and feeling associated with the 1952 Eliot Elementary School.

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HISTORY

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

Statement of Significance

Built in 1952, the Harriet Tubman Leadership Academy for Young Women (originally Eliot 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 (PPS 1945: 2-3). During the 1940s there was a substantial increase in the number of children in the extreme east and southeast areas of Portland. The census tracts in the Eliot Neighborhood showed an increase in school age children between 1930 and 1940 (PPS 1945:18). Beginning with the 1945 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. The 1952 the Tubman (originally Eliot) campus was purchased for \$53,380 and the facility was constructed for a total cost of \$652,203 (PPS Chronology).

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).

The architects of Tubman, Burns, Bear, McNeil & Schneider, adopted the building program and principles that dominated the discourse for school design during the second half of the twentieth century. The firm of Burns, Bear, McNeil & Schneider was founded by Thomas Burns, a prominent architect and contractor in Portland from 1933 to 1961. Burns attended Oregon State College and the University of Oregon Extension. He worked on a number of notable projects including the McMinnville High School, Lloyd Golf Course Clubhouse, Bonneville Administration Building and several residences. In 1946 Burns established a new partnership— Burns, Bear, McNeil & Schneider which operated until his death in 1961. Burns, Bear, McNeil and Schneider designed the Portland International Airport Terminal, Northwest Natural Gas building, the Medial Research Laboratories Building at University of Oregon Medical School and the Physics-Chemistry building and dormitories at Oregon State University (Ritz 2002 59).

The Tubman campus employed the finger plan type plan that became popular during the post-war period. Similar to other schools of this type, Tubman featured a single story modified L-shaped building with wings forming an exterior courtyard. The construction of the facility, reinforced concrete with brick veneer, allowed for economic building and ease of expansion. Aluminum windows, glass block, and other mass produced materials now readily available due to the conversion of the defense industries to manufacturing facilities provided economical decoration.

During the early 1980s, the school was expanded to accommodate the changing needs of Portland residents. In 1980 the facility was closed to undergo renovations and students were temporarily sent to Monroe High School (PPS Chronology). From 1980 to 1985, additions were made to the building and interior spaces were reconfigured. The Portland firm Unthank, Seder & Poticha AIA designed the new additions (PPS Plans). The facility reopened in 1985 as the Harriet Tubman Middle School (PPS Chronology). The school is now known as the Harriet Tubman Leadership Academy for Young Women.

While Tubman is a notable historic building, it does not retain a level of historical integrity commensurate with other Portland schools constructed during the same period and is therefore not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The additions and interior renovations have altered the plan and exterior and interior details of the original 1952 building. Due to the loss of integrity, Harriet Tubman Leadership Academy for Young Women is not eligible under either NRHP Criteria A, B, or 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: 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. *Repairing, Rehabilitating and Modernizing the School Plant*. Portland: Portland Public Schools. Office of the Superintendent, 1945.

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

_____. *Tubman Middle School. Facility Plans*.

_____. *Tubman Middle School. Facility Profile*.

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



Main building (199A) and 1983 Entry Addition, north (side) and east (front) elevations



Main building (199A) and 1983 Addition (199B), south (side) elevation



Main building (199A), east (side) elevation



Industrial Arts building (199C), east (side) elevation and breezeway



Main building (199A) and 1983 Addition (199B), west (rear) elevation

**Harriet Tubman Leadership Academy for
Young Women
Exterior Photos
ENTRIX, 2009**



1983 Entrance Addition, foyer



Main building (199A), library and mezzanine



Main building (199A) and 1983 Addition (199B), commons area



Main building (199A), classroom



Main building (199A), gymnasium

**Harriet Tubman Leadership Academy for
Young Women
Exterior Photos
ENTRIX, 2009**

Tubman Young Women's Academy

2231 N Flint Ave, Portland OR, 97227

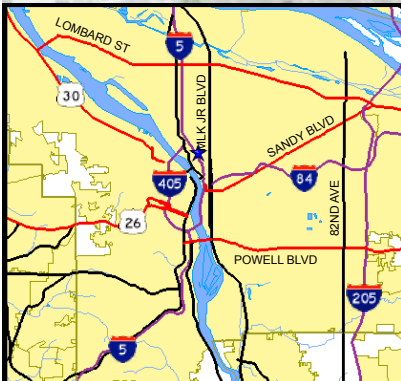
[View Site in Google Maps](#)






2009 photograph of the west elevation from inside 1983 addition to the Tubman 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. Original Building (199A), 1952
2. South Addition (199B), 1983
3. Industrial Arts Bldg. (199C), 1983