

Oregon Historic Site Form

Vernon School
2044 Killingsworth St
Portland, Multnomah County

LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME

address: <u>2044 NE Killingsworth St</u> <input type="checkbox"/> apprx. addr	historic name: <u>Vernon School</u>
<u>Portland</u> <input type="checkbox"/> vcnty <u>Multnomah County</u>	current/ other names: <u>Vernon 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>3</u>	total # eligible resources: <u>0</u> 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>1931</u> (c.) <input type="checkbox"/> secondary date: <u>1953</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>Classical Revival: other</u>	prim style comments: <u>Classical detailing around entrances.</u>
secondary style: <u>Mediterranean Revival</u>	sec style comments: <u>Red pantile roof</u>
primary siding: <u>Brick:Other/Undefined</u>	siding comments: _____
secondary siding: <u>Cast Stone</u>	
plan type: <u>School (General)</u>	architect: <u>Jones, George</u>
	builder: _____
comments/notes: <u>HRI Rank III.</u>	

GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS

survey project name or other grouping name	<u>PPS Historic Building Assessment 2009</u>	<u>Survey & Inventory Project</u>
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farmstead/cluster name: _____ external site #: 284
(ID# used in city/agency database)

SHPO INFO FOR THIS PROPERTY

NR date listed: _____
ILS survey date: 6/19/2009
RLS survey date: 6/19/2009
Gen File date: _____
106 Project(s)



ARCHITECTURAL / PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

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

Summary

Vernon Elementary School is located in northeast Portland at 2044 NE Killingsworth Street. Aligned on an east-west axis, the two story school building (284) is situated at the north end of the 3.70-acre campus. Wood frame "portables" located at the south and east side of the main building provide additional classroom space. The 1931 reinforced concrete structure, faced with variegated brick, rests on a poured concrete foundation. A hipped roof, clad with red pantiles, covers the central mass of U-shaped building. The remaining bays of the irregular shaped school facility are covered by flat roofs with a parapet. Designed in a modified Georgian style, cast stone is utilized to divide the elevations horizontally and to distinguish significant architectural spaces on the exterior elevations. Fenestration consists of a mixture of grouped metal frame and wood frame windows.

Architectural Description

Vernon Elementary School is situated in northeast Portland at 2044 NE Killingsworth Street. The surrounding neighborhood consists primarily of single family residences. Much of the neighborhood had been developed by the 1920s, but the area continued to experience growth through the 1950s (Sanborn Maps 1924-1928, 1908-1950).

Aligned on an east-west axis, the two story school building is situated at the north end of the 3.70-acre campus. The building rests at the crest of a moderately sloping hill that provides a barrier between the school and Killingsworth Street. A garden is situated at the west side of the school, a grass covered hill is located to the east, and playfields and asphalt covered playgrounds located on the south side. Wood frame "portables" are located at the south and east side of the main building.

The reinforced concrete structure, faced with variegated brick, rests on a poured concrete foundation. A hipped roof, clad with red pantiles, covers the central mass of U-shaped building. The remaining bays of the irregular shaped school building are covered by flat roofs with a parapet. Designed in a hybrid style that combines Classical Revival and Mediterranean Revival pantile roof, the building features cast stone that is utilized to divide the elevations horizontally and to distinguish significant architectural spaces on the exterior elevations. The decorative detailing is most prominent at the original entry which features quoins, scroll work, and a pediment. The entry, highlighted by a cross gable roof, divides the building bilaterally. Projecting bays cap the north and south ends of the north elevation. Fenestration consists of a mixture of grouped metal frame and six-over-six with multi-light transom wood frame windows.

A double loaded corridor provides circulation throughout the building. Doors at the terminus of each corridor provide additional egress. The symmetry of the building is enhanced by the placement of the primary gathering spaces in the east (gymnasium) and west (auditorium) bays of the building. Additional gathering space is provided in the basement cafeteria. Interior finishes include linoleum floor tiles, acoustic tile, and exposed brick. Fluorescent light fixtures provide illumination throughout the school. The building retains much of the original woodwork including window surrounds, moldings, and built-in benches in the corridors.

The majority of the classroom spaces are arranged in groups of three interconnected rooms. Partitions and half walls create interior hallways and storage areas for the irregularly shaped classroom area. Despite the subdivisions, many of the original built-in cabinets on the interior walls are intact.

The school is heated by two boilers that have been converted to gas. Metal registers provide heat for the classroom spaces.

Alterations

Since the time of its construction in 1931, Vernon Elementary School has been significantly altered. An additions was built on the south elevation in 1953. Interior alterations were made in the cafeteria in 1956. The most significant changes to the building occurred in 1978 when the interior of the school was renovated to accommodate the early childhood center (Vernon Facility Profile). This work resulted in classrooms being combined into suites with two classrooms flanking a shared space that contained sinks, a refrigerator, and storage. The auditorium was leveled and converted to a multi-purpose room. The Oregonian newspaper reported that during this remodel "...the 12 foot-wide corridors were reduced to seven feet, and the bathrooms were reduced by half in size to facilitate the enlarged classrooms. New heating, lighting, and plumbing was installed, and one of the four stairways was removed to increase security and safety" (Oregonian. 12-06-1979). The windows were replaced in 1986. In 1990 the school began to use the existing door on the east side of the north elevation as the primary entrance to the school.

Although the building retains some original windows, built-in cabinetry, and other woodwork, the significant alterations to the building have resulted in a loss of the integrity of Vernon Elementary School. Alterations to the interior have changed the ceiling heights, corridor widths, stair locations, classroom configurations, and significant spaces including the auditorium.

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

Constructed in 1931, Vernon Elementary School was part of the last wave of an extensive building program begun by Portland Public Schools in the early 1900s. Gradually influenced by John Dewey's Progressive Education Movement, the program responded to changing city demographics and ideas concerning school safety, sanitation, and child centered instructional methods beginning in the first decade of the 1900s (Rippa, 1997: passim; Cremin 1961: 135-153; Cubberley 1915: 283-290). By 1905, it became increasingly clear that dramatic increases in school-age children outstripped the district's current classroom capacity and existing schools could not effectively serve areas of the city with new residential development (Cubberley 1915: 283-285, 288-290).

After several well-publicized school fires elsewhere in the United States, calls for a more fundamental change in the building stock of the district began as early as 1906 when Mayor Lane called for the construction of new "fireproof" school buildings (Oregonian, 10-31-1906). In 1910, various city neighborhood "advancement clubs" joined forces to discuss the unfit school buildings in their respective neighborhoods (Oregonian 07-31-1910). Soon after this meeting, on August 16, 1910, the Portland City Council enacted a requirement that all schools constructed after January 1, 1911 would have to be of fire proof construction (Powers and Corning 1937: 183). By 1914, in the first joint meeting between Portland city officials, Multnomah County Commissioners, and the school board, officials agreed to work with building code officials to encourage the use of fireproof construction and to implement fire safety measures in all existing and future schools (Oregonian, 03-31-1914).

In 1908, Portland Public Schools created the Bureau of Properties in an effort to centralize the management of the district's various properties (Powers and Corning 1937: 182). Within this office, the District architect took on a more formalized role in the design and maintenance of school facilities. Two of the most influential district architects during this period included Floyd Naramore and George Jones who designed a majority of the schools between 1908 and 1932.

These new school buildings were often constructed of brick and concrete and were one or two stories in height. To speed the construction of the new schools and to anticipate later growth in the neighborhood, these new buildings were often constructed in units sometimes referred to as extensible schools (Powers and Corning 1937: 182). The buildings also contained more differentiated and increasingly specialized instructional spaces such as libraries, gymnasiums, science rooms, music rooms, and assembly spaces (Powers and Corning 1937: 182). The architectural details of the new schools were largely encompassed by the Classical Revival, Colonial Revival, and Collegiate Gothic styles; architectural revivals that were viewed as inspirational and appropriate for educational settings (Betelle 1919: 28; Sibley 1923: 66; Patton 1967: 1-8).

The architect of Vernon School, George Jones, was well versed in the design of school facilities through his role as Superintendent of building for the district. The son of Thomas J. Jones, who had also served as district architect for many years, George Jones was born in Portland in 1887. After attending Oregon State College for two years, George Jones obtained a degree in architecture in 1913. Jones worked in New York for several years before serving in the U.S. Army Combat Engineers during World War I. Following his return to Portland in 1920, Jones obtained his architecture license. He quickly assumed the position of school architect after his predecessor Floyd A. Naramore became district architect for the Seattle School District.

In his role as district architect, George Jones designed about 25 new schools and supervised the construction of additions for many existing building. Following his tenure with the Portland Schools, Jones went into private practice in Portland. With architect Harold Marsh, he established the firm of Jones & Marsh. Throughout his career, Jones continued to specialize in school design, with projects in Pendleton, Klamath Falls, and Oregon City. The firm of Jones & Marsh also designed additions to Roosevelt High School in Portland, buildings at Concordia Academy, and the Engineering wing and coliseum at Oregon State College in Corvallis (Ritz 2002 217).

In 1907 the Portland School District acquired a site at 23rd and Going Street for \$4,000.00. On this site, the district developed the original Vernon School Campus. The district constructed several additions to the original 1907 building and a detached manual training building (Portland Chronology Binder).

By the mid 1920s the district began planning for a new school facility. The choice of locations for the new school sparked some controversy among Portland residents. In public meetings in December 1926, neighborhood residents presented opposing views on the proposed relocation of the school (Oregonian 12-07-1926). Despite the controversy, in 1929 the district acquired land at 2044 N. Killingsworth Street for the site of the proposed new school (Portland Chronology Binder). In June 1932, more than 500 students, parents and members of the board of Portland school district attended the ceremonial laying of the cornerstone. Built for \$250,198.00, the Oregonian newspaper praised the school as "modern throughout and carrying out the newest features in school construction" (Oregonian 06-07-1932). The school's dedication was formally celebrated on 11-19-1932 (Oregonian 11-19-1932).

Since the time of its construction in 1931, Vernon Elementary School has been significantly altered. An additions was built on the south elevation in 1953. Interior alterations were made in the cafeteria in 1956. The most significant changes to the building occurred in 1978 when the interior of the school was renovated to accommodate the early childhood center.

Although designed by George Jones during his tenure as Superintendent of Building for Portland Public Schools and one of the few schools built in Portland during the Depression, Vernon Elementary School does not retain a level of historical significance and integrity commensurate with other Portland Elementary Schools constructed of similar styles during the same period and is therefore not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). While elements of the Georgian style are discernable on the building, the expression of the cast stone is not as sophisticated as that on other buildings of the style designed by Jones. Additionally, the removal of windows, additions, and interior modifications have blurred the original corridor plan and altered significant interior spaces. The resulting overall loss of integrity of design, workmanship, and feeling to Vernon Elementary School make it not eligible under NRHP Criteria A, B, or C.

RESEARCH INFORMATION

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(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

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- _____. Vernon Facility Plan.
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- Rippa, Alexander. Education in a Free Society: An American History. New York: Longman, 1997.
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<https://catalog.multcolib.org/validate?url=http%3A%2F%2F0-sanborn.umi.com.catalog.multcolib.org%3A80%2F>. Accessed June 16, 2009.
- Sibley, Ernest. "Why I Prefer the Colonial Style." School Board Journal: Vol. 66 (January 1923).
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Entry facing northeast



West elevation facing southeast



East elevation facing west



South elevation facing northwest



South elevation facing northwest



Corridor with original built in and new columns facing east



Gymnasium facing west



Classroom built-ins



Auditorium facing northwest

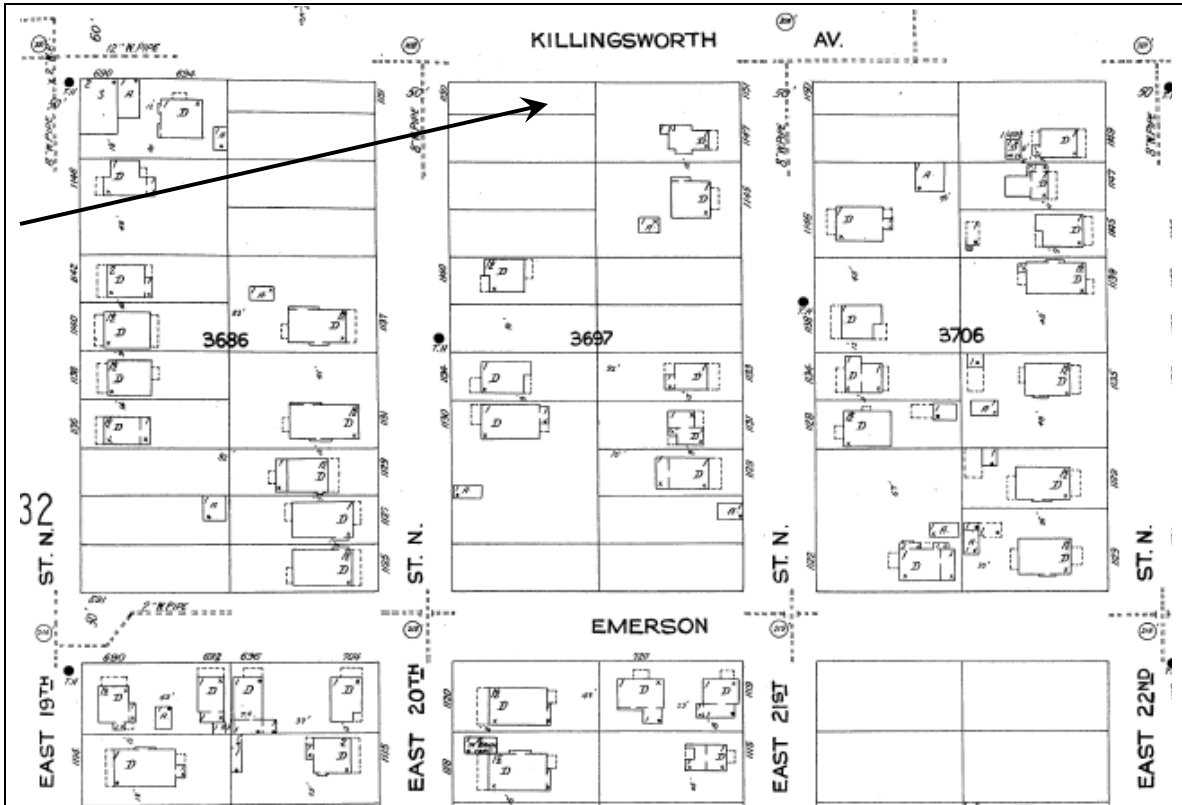


Staircase with handrail



ENTRIX

Down to Earth. Down to Business.™

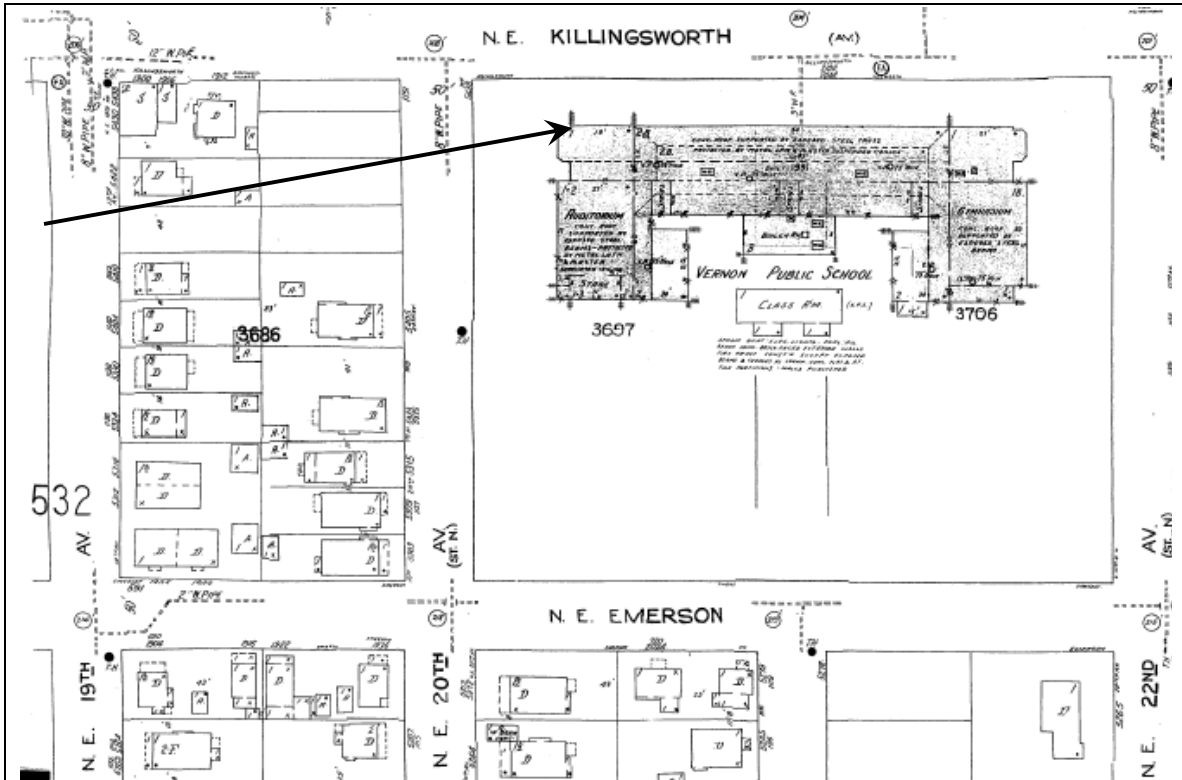


Updated to 1924-1928, Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Portland, Oregon, Map 533. Arrow points to future location of Vernon Public School.



ENTRIX

Down to Earth. Down to Business.™

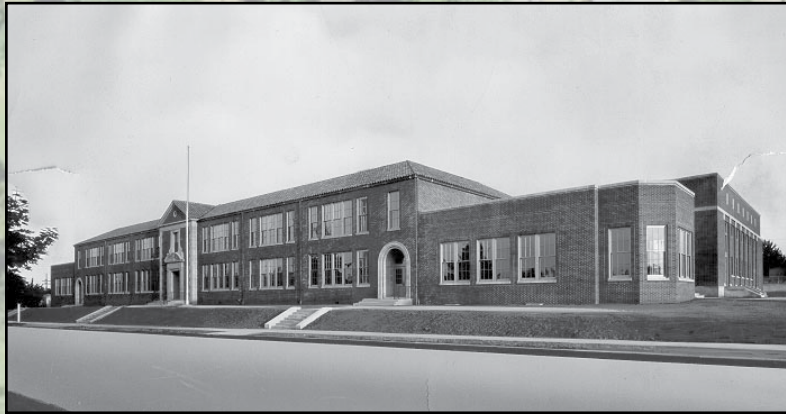


Updated to 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Portland, Oregon, Map 533. Arrow points to Vernons Public School. Note street change and removal of houses at school location.

Vernon School

2044 NE Killingsworth St, Portland OR, 97211

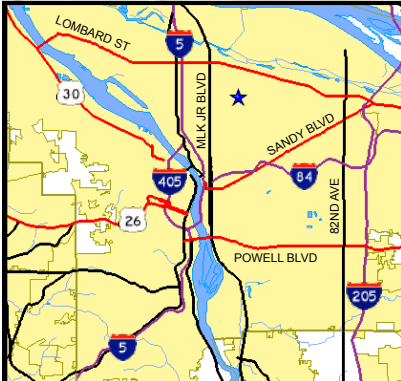
[View Site in Google Maps](#)






1930s photograph of the Vernon School, looking southeast.



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 (284A), 1931
2. Portables (284P), 1948
3. Classroom Addition (284A), 1953