

# Oregon Historic Site Form

West Sylvan School  
8111 West Slope Dr  
Portland, Multnomah County

## LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME

address: <u>8111 SW West Slope Dr</u> <input type="checkbox"/> apprx. addr	historic name: <u>West Sylvan School</u>
<u>Portland</u> <input type="checkbox"/> vcnty <u>Multnomah County</u>	current/ other names: <u>West Sylvan Middle 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>2</u>	total # eligible resources: <u>0</u> total # ineligible resources: <u>1</u>
elig. evaluation: <u>not eligible/non-contributing</u>	NR status: _____ NR date listed: _____ (indiv listed only; see Grouping for hist dist)
primary constr date: <u>1954</u> (c.) <input type="checkbox"/> secondary date: _____ (c.) <input type="checkbox"/> (optional--use for major addns)	orig use comments: _____
primary orig use: <u>School</u>	prim style comments: _____
secondary orig use: _____	sec style comments: _____
primary style: <u>Northwest Regional</u>	siding comments: _____
secondary style: _____	architect: <u>Freeman, Hayslip and Tuft</u>
primary siding: <u>Standard Brick</u>	builder: _____
secondary siding: _____	
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 &amp; Inventory Project</u>
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farmstead/cluster name: \_\_\_\_\_ external site #: 196  
(ID# used in city/agency database)

## SHPO INFO FOR THIS PROPERTY

NR date listed: \_\_\_\_\_  
ILS survey date: 6/23/2009  
RLS survey date: 6/23/2009  
Gen File date: \_\_\_\_\_  
**106 Project(s)**



Main entrance, looking northwest.

## ARCHITECTURAL / PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

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

### Description Summary

Situated near the residential neighborhood of West Slope in East Beaverton, the West Sylvan School is located at 8111 West Slope Drive. Built in 1954, the school building (196) is situated on a mostly grass-covered 14-acre campus. The modern period building exhibits some characteristics of the Northwest Regional style. A flat roof covers the irregularly shaped building. The modified finger plan building is a single story and rests on a poured concrete foundation. A two story attached wing is located to the west of the main building. Cladding for the wood framing building consists of a mixture of brick veneer, concrete, and corrugated metal siding. The school facilities include classrooms, two gymnasiums (including an auditorium and cafeteria), media center/library, industrial shop, home economics, choir and band rooms, two courtyards, and an administrative office.

### Architectural Description

The West Sylvan School is situated on a suburban-style campus typical of post-World War II schools. Grass covered playfields are located to south and west of the school. An asphalt-covered driveway lies adjacent to the southeast of the school building and several parking areas are located to the southeast and east. A courtyard, with mixed deciduous growth, serves as the primary organizing element for the building. A smaller courtyard is located between the west wing and the main section of the school.

The finger plan school is approached from the south and sits on a poured concrete foundation. The interconnecting flat roofs of the main wing are covered by composition roofing material. The double height spaces of the two gymnasiums and the north wing also feature flat roofs. Brick veneer is the primary siding, with concrete cladding on the gymnasiums and corrugated metal on the north end of the building. Fenestration consists of a mixture of fixed, single pane, metal and wood frame, symmetrically placed, hinged windows. Glass block comprises the upper half of many of the hinged windows in the main section of the building. Double-leaf metal doors are located at all the building's entrances. The Vernacular style building exhibits some characteristics of the Northwest Regional style, most notably, the central courtyards and variety of cladding.

The interior layout of the main section of the school consists of double loaded corridors in a double hollow square configuration. The main section of the school is organized into three wings: the southwest wing houses the gymnasiums (and auditorium and cafeteria), the two-story west wing consists of classrooms, and the north wing includes the shop, choir, band, and home economic rooms. Two east-west hallways connect the west wing to the main portion of the school.

The double-loaded corridors retain their original configuration, height, and features consisting of plaster veneer walls, tubular fluorescent lights suspended from acoustic tile ceilings, linoleum floors, external metal lockers, metal framing, molding, and recessed metal classroom doors. The hallways in the west wing are narrow with low acoustic tile ceilings and enclosed florescent lights. There are skylights in the ceilings of the shop/home economic and band and choir wing. Stairwells between the 1st and 2nd floor in the west wing are open and intact, constructed with concrete stairs and walls with metal railings.

The classrooms are primarily rectangular. Standard features include wooden book cases, cabinets and closets, sinks, plastic laminate counters, and tubular fluorescent light fixtures suspended from acoustic tile clad ceilings. The classrooms retain their original configurations, height, linoleum tile floors, plaster veneer walls, and metal framing and molding. The classrooms in the west wing have low acoustic tile ceilings with enclosed fluorescent lights. These rooms have a smaller number of cabinets, closets, and shelves than the main portion of the building. The built-in furnishings are constructed of metal or composition board. The shop/home economic, choir and band rooms have high bay acoustic tile clad ceilings. There are no windows in these rooms.

The media center/library is a spacious carpeted open room divided into several work and study area tables and chairs.

Both gymnasiums have high bay composition-based ceilings with fluorescent lights. There are no windows. Seating consists of folding wooden bleachers. The original wood flooring is intact. In the lower gymnasium/auditorium/cafeteria, the acoustic tile ceiling is supported by horizontal cross beams. The walls are plaster veneer and there is an auditorium-type stage. Features in the upper gymnasium include wood panel walls, original flooring, and horizontal ceiling beams.

### Alterations/Integrity

The West Sylvan School has a fair-to-poor degree of integrity. The school has undergone several incompatible additions to its original building plan, including the west wing and the shop/home economic/choir and band classroom wing. The hallways, classrooms, gymnasiums, media center, and stairwells retain their original configuration, height, building materials, and features. There have been minimal modifications to the exterior cladding, roof lines, and fenestration of the main section of the building.

## 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 1954, West Sylvan 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).

The architects of West Sylvan School, the Portland firm of Freeman, Hayslip and Tuft, had significant experience in the design of schools and other public buildings in Oregon. A native of Kansas, Claude Freeman attended Oregon State College from 1908 to 1910. He subsequently worked with Frank Clark, an architect in Ashland, Oregon. In 1922, Freeman established a practice in Portland where he specialized in the design of schools. In 1942, Freeman established a partnership with Sydney B. Hayslip that was renamed several times, including Freeman, Hayslip and Tuft as other partners were brought into the practice. Sydney B. Hayslip practiced architecture for over forty years in Portland after attending the University of Oregon School of Architecture. He worked for several prominent Northwest architecture firms including that of the former district architect for PPS, Floyd A. Naramore, before entering into practice with Freeman. Stewart Tuft, a graduate of the School of Architecture at the University of Oregon worked for several architects and the Housing Authority of Portland before joining the firm in 1948. Freeman was recognized throughout Oregon as a specialist in school design (Ritz 2002: 137,169,395).

Although associated with a noteworthy architectural firm and several events related to the growth of the Portland school district, West Sylvan School does not retain a level of historical integrity commensurate with other Middle Schools constructed of similar styles during the same period and is therefore not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). While the building features some characteristic elements of schools designed in the mid-twentieth century, several alterations have diminished the building's integrity of materials, design, and feeling. These alterations include interior changes to the west wing and the shop/home economic/choir and band classroom wing. Due to this loss of integrity, West Sylvan School 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

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.

\_\_\_\_\_. *West Sylvan Middle School. Facility Profile*.

\_\_\_\_\_. *West Sylvan 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.



Southeast front entry elevation



West elevation



East elevation entry



West elevation



West elevation gymnasium

**West Sylvan School  
Exterior Photos  
ENTRIX, 2009**



Gymnasium facing west



Corridor facing west



Stairwell landing



Classroom built-ins



Corridor facing east

**West Sylvan School  
Interior Photos  
ENTRIX, 2009**

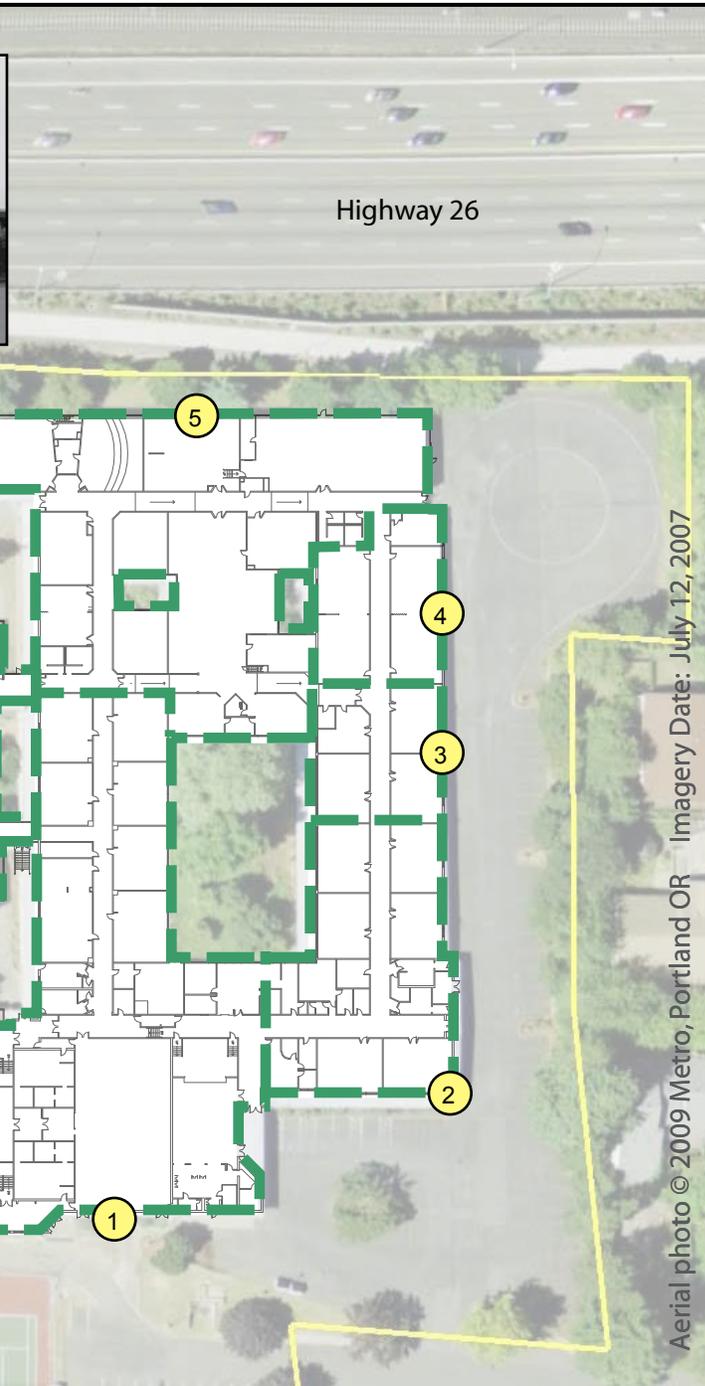
# West Sylvan School

8111 SW West Slope Dr, Portland OR, 97225

[View Site in Google Maps](#)



West Sylvan School, looking northwest, 2009



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 (196A), 1953
2. Classroom Addition (196A), 1958
3. Classroom Addition (196A), 1960
4. Classroom Addition (196A), 1963
5. Class & Theater Add. (196A), 1974
6. Classroom Addition (196A), 1989