LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME

address: 1600 SW Salmon St
current/other names: Abraham Lincoln High School
historical name: Lincoln High School

PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS

resource type: Building
total # eligible resources: 0
total # ineligible resources: 1
elig. evaluation: not eligible/ non-contributing

primary constr date: 1951
primary orig use: School
primary orig use comments: Finger Plan type school

height (# stories): 3

secondary orig use:
secondary orig use comments:

primary style: International
prim style comments:

secondary style:
sec style comments:

primary siding: Standard Brick
siding comments:

secondary siding: Concrete: Other/ Undefined

plan type: School (General)

comments/notes: HRI Rank II.

GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS

survey project: PPS Historic Building Assessment 2009
farmstead/cluster name:

name or other grouping name: Survey & Inventory Project

SHPO INFO FOR THIS PROPERTY

NR date listed: 6/23/2009
ILS survey date: 6/23/2009
RLS survey date: 6/23/2009
Gen File date: 

106 Project(s)

pecs maingall st.png
Oregon Historic Site Form

Lincoln High School
1600 Salmon St
Portland, Multnomah County

ARCHITECTURAL / PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

Description Summary

Lincoln High School is located at 1600 SW Salmon St. in the Goose Hollow neighborhood of southwest Portland. The 11 acre property includes the main school building (1950, 120A) and two frame portable classroom buildings (2000, no numbers). The two story brick face and reinforced concrete building, constructed in 1951, exhibits a low horizontal massing and a U-shaped plan. The building features a flat roof and the fenestration consists of repeating rows of single pane, large light windows. Overall, the building exhibits minimal architectural embellishments but still conveys the various components of the school by clearly differentiating between the classrooms and the double-height gymnasium and auditorium that largely lacks windows.

Architectural Description

The Lincoln High School is situated within the Goose Hollow neighborhood of southwest Portland. The campus occupies an 11 acre, rectangular shaped parcels with the north side bounded by SW Salmon St., east side by SW 14th Ave. and west side by SW 18th Ave, and to the south by office buildings. Development in the surrounding areas consists primarily of commercial uses, surface parking lots, as well as I-405 which passes immediately to the east.

The high school campus consists of a finger-plan school building (120A), two portables (not numbered), as well as an artificial surface football field and oval track that are located to the west of the main building. The school is clearly integrated into the site, as a below ground level cafeteria provides easy access to the field. A grassy courtyard is formed between the two arms of the U-shape massing and a circular concrete planting bed lies near the top of the “U”. The planting bed is formerly the site of a fountain, but it still contains a welded bronze sculpture by Thomas Hardy which was dedicated in 1960. The courtyard is terraced with the slope descending from east to west toward the building. A surface parking lot is located near the southeast corner of the property.

The school’s principal access into the building is situated on the north side of the building. The concrete paved plaza on the north side of the school affords access to the two separate main entrances. Each entrance is marked by a concrete column lined entry, but the two entries are separated by a long raised planting bed. Each entry exhibits two sets of double doors and concrete columns that exhibit horizontal channels and a raised panel. To the east and west of the entries are one story brick-faced projections that extend from the two story main building. The brickwork of these projections and the rest of the school is a mixed common bond that is largely composed of stretchers interspersed by randomly laid headers. The windows for these projections as well as for most of the main building consist of bands of metal, three part windows with a bottom hopper. Each set of windows is separated by a vertical brick-faced column. A concrete balustrade to the north of the main entrances overlooks the football field. Immediately below the plaza is the plate glass faced entry into the cafeteria. Two double doors and single entry provide access into the cafeteria from the field level. Each of the classroom fingers that extend from the main part of the building are clearly classrooms as they exhibit similar types of windows as those found on the main entrance. The auditorium and gymnasium, however, exhibit different exterior treatments as they both largely lack window openings and feature a double-height volume that is ultimately taller than the classroom wings. The school features three floors with a portion of the bottom floor lying below ground due to changes in the site's topography.

The interior spaces of the school are arranged around a U-shaped double-loaded corridor that provides entry to all floors of the school. The corridors and classrooms typically exhibit 12” by 12” tile floors and ceramic tile walls. The classrooms are typically square in shape and feature acoustic tile ceilings.

Unlike most finger-plan schools constructed in Portland in the 1950s, the gymnasium and auditorium are not as segregated from the classrooms. The gymnasium, for instance, is situated between rows of classrooms and is principally accessed via the main corridor and not from the outside. The auditorium is accessed through a faux-wood and stone foyer that exhibits paneled reveals. The interior of the auditorium features its original seating and balcony and the stage is framed by a wood paneled reveal similar to that found in the foyer. The gymnasium features a drop ceiling and ceramic tile walls.

Alterations/Integrity

The most significant alterations to the school occurred in 2000 when the main office was expanded to the south. The exterior of this addition presents a different type of window pattern as that found on the school as each bank consists of four sets of four pane windows that are not separated by a brick column. A new entrance was also added to the south side of the south classroom finger in 2000. The two story entrance leads into a vestibule and elevator to the second floor. The building retains its integrity of design, materials, location, association, feeling, workmanship, and setting.

HISTORY

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

When the original Lincoln High School was erected at the corner of Market and Park in 1911, the building took up an entire block and was praised for its innovative, efficient, and attractive design. Following World War II, however, the building could no longer adequately serve a growing number of high school students. As early as 1945, PPS purchased the so-called “Kamm Tract” for $250,000 for use as the site for a new high school. In 1949, site preparations at the site began with the improvement of the lot for athletic fields (Oregonian 1-28-1949). By 1950, PPS had retained Portland architect Hollis E. Johnston to develop plans for the new high school that would eventually cost over $2.5 million dollars (PPS Chronology Binder). The school would eventually be dedicated and occupied by 1952, but newspapers reported the school had cost $3.25 million dollars (Oregonian 9-11-1952).

Hollis Johnston, a graduate of Jefferson High School in Portland and the University of Oregon Architecture School, was an experienced designer of schools and other public facilities. Johnston worked with several prominent architects including Lawrence & Holford and Sutton & Whitney before establishing a solo practice in 1930. During the depression Johnston served as chief consulting architect for the U.S. Corps of Engineers on the Bonneville Dam Project. He subsequently worked with Herman Brookman before founding the firm of Stanton & Johnston with A. Glenn Stanton. Work during this period included the design of military projects, structures for the new Lewis & Clark College Campus, and the Stadium Branch of the U.S. Nation Bank. After the War, Johnston reestablished his own practice. In 1957 he invited Robert J. Koch, an employee since 1946, to become his partner. Johnston is known for his work on the Portland Town Club (1931- NRHP) by Johnson, Wallwork & Johnston, the Watson/Eastman house (1928-NRHP), Tillamook Blimp Hangers (NRHP), the Joseph Gerber House, and the new Lincoln High School. During his partnership with Koch, Johnston designed Bridlemile Elementary School (Ritz 2003: 214-215).

As the first high school constructed in Portland after World War II, Lincoln was an example of revised modernist ideas about the appearance and function of schools. 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 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).

Although many of the architects for schools in Portland continued to design their schools to be extensible, designers turned away from the two-story schools with centralized massing and the period revivals that were popular in the 1920s. Instead many architects adopted the principles of the Modern movement and its regional variant, the Northwest Regional style, choosing to express functional areas through massing and materials to create innovative forms (McMath 1974: 628). Classrooms featured extensive built-ins that included sinks, slots for bulky rolls of paper, and coat storage. Many buildings incorporated interior courtyards which facilitated access to the outdoors and expanded the opportunities for passive ventilation and daylighting.

Like many of Portland’s elementary schools erected during the period, the new Lincoln High School featured a finger plan that sought to decentralize and segregate classroom instruction from other school functions housed in the gymnasium, auditorium, music rooms, as well as the cafeteria. The cafeteria, located below an open plaza, opened directly onto the athletic fields. The most significant alterations to the school occurred in 2000 when office spaces on the east side of the school were expanded and a new entrance was constructed.

While indicative of the post-war design principles and retaining its historical integrity, Lincoln High School does not appear to be eligible for the NRHP. The overall architectural design, structural composition, and building materials used for the school were commonly reflected in most high and elementary schools of the period. Other high schools constructed in the post-war period in Portland, such as Wilson and Madison, better reflect the experimentation with building materials, school planning, and overall design. The school represented a major commission for Hollis Johnston, but other buildings already listed on the National Register better reflect his mastery of modern structural materials and architectural composition.
Oregon Historic Site Form

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Bibliography


________. School Chronology Binder.


East elevation (rear) entrance (120A).

Gymnasium (120A), looking southeast.

West elevation (120A), looking east.

New entrance on west side of building (120A).

Parking lot and west elevation (120A).
Main corridor (120A).

Auditorium with balcony (120A).

Gymnasium (120A).

Typical stairway (120A).

Typical classroom (120A).
Lincoln High School
1600 SW Salmon St, Portland OR, 97205
View Site in Google Maps

Building Periods
1. Main Building (180A), 1950
2. Portables, 2000

Historical Significance and Building Integrity

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

2009 photograph of Lincoln High School, west elevation.