

# Oregon Historic Site Form

Applegate Facility  
7650 Commercial  
Portland, Multnomah County

## LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME

address: <u>7650 N Commercial</u> <input type="checkbox"/> apprx. addr	historic name: <u>Applegate Facility</u>
<u>Portland</u> <input type="checkbox"/> vcnty <u>Multnomah County</u>	current/ other names: <u>Farragut Primary 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: <u>0</u> total # ineligible resources: <u>2</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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> secondary date: <u>1990</u> (c.) <input type="checkbox"/> (optional--use for major addns)	orig use comments: _____
primary orig use: <u>School</u>	prim style comments: _____
secondary orig use: <u>Education-Related</u>	sec style comments: _____
primary style: <u>Northwest Regional</u>	siding comments: _____
secondary style: _____	architect: <u>Wick and Hilgers</u>
primary siding: <u>Wood:Other/Undefined</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>
farmstead/cluster name:	external site #: <u>134</u>	
	(ID# used in city/agency database)	

## SHPO INFO FOR THIS PROPERTY

NR date listed: \_\_\_\_\_  
ILS survey date: 6/25/2009  
RLS survey date: 6/25/2009  
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

Applegate Elementary School is located at 7605 N Commercial Street in the Piedmont Neighborhood of north Portland. The 1.37-acre school campus is situated at the south end of Farragut Park. In addition to the primary classroom building (134A), the campus includes a portable classroom building (134P1) located at the west portion of the property. The main school building has a rectangular massing with a wood frame that rests on a poured concrete foundation. Designed in the Northwest Regional style, the building features a moderately pitched gable roof and overhanging eaves. Vinyl siding covers the single story building. Fenestration consists primarily of wood frame windows.

### Architectural Description

Applegate Elementary School is located at 7605 N Commercial Street in the Piedmont Neighborhood of north Portland. The 1.37-acre school campus is situated at the south end of Farragut Park. Development in the neighborhood consists of a mixture of single family houses, multi-family residences, and mid-size commercial and industrial buildings. In addition to the primary classroom building, the campus includes a portable located at the west portion of the property.

The rectangular, wood frame building rests on a poured concrete foundation. Designed in the Northwest Regional style, the building features a moderately pitched gable roof and overhanging eaves. Vinyl siding covers the single story building. Fenestration consists primarily of wood frame windows.

Applegate Elementary School features a finger plan. The 26, 000 square foot school is oriented on an east to west axis along a double loaded corridor. The primary entry to the school is from the east. A gymnasium/cafeteria, located on the south side of the building, provides the principal community space. Wood panels, stained a pale blonde, line the walls of the gymnasium/cafeteria. The classrooms are primarily rectangular with built-ins on the interior walls. The corridors feature a composition tile wainscot, 12" x12" floor tiles, and an acoustic panel ceiling.

### Alterations/Integrity

Since its construction in 1954, there have been minimal alterations to Applegate Elementary School. The portable was built in 1969. Although the east end of the building was expanded in 1990 to provide additional classrooms and office space, the horizontal form, roof shape, and corridor configuration were retained. Other alterations include re-cladding the building in vinyl siding and building an accessible entry on the south elevation. Applegate Elementary School retains its integrity with its original wood windows and interior finishes including the classroom built-ins, gymnasium panels, and corridor wainscot intact.

## 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 1954, Applegate 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 (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 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).

In response to the growing population of north Portland, the district acquired Block 1 of lots 5 -13 in the Lovewood Addition of Portland for \$14,825.00. Named for Jesse Applegate (1811-1888) an Oregon pioneer who was active in Oregon's early government, the new school was constructed in 1954 for \$198,580 (Portland Chronology Binder, Snyder).

The architects of Applegate Elementary School, Wick and Hilgers, were well versed in the design of academic buildings. Founded by Clarence Wick and Albert Hilgers, two graduates of the University of Oregon's School of Architecture, the firm was responsible for the design of many public facilities in the Northwest. In addition to working with a number of private architectural firms including the office of Herman Brookman, Clarence Wick gained additional design experience from working with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Hilgers, a native of Portland who attended Benson Polytechnic School, worked for a number of Northwest architects before serving as the Resident Engineer for the Public Works Administration from 1937-1939. He subsequently worked as an architect on the Bonneville Project in 1940 and 1941. In 1941 Hilgers entered into partnership with Wick and Gerald Scott. During this period Wick and Hilgers also worked together at the Housing Authority of Portland. At the Housing Authority Wick served as Director of Development from 1941-1945 and Hilgers worked as an assistant director of development from 1943-1944. In 1945 the

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architectural practice was reestablished as the firm of Wick and Hilgers. The firm's first large commission was as the architects of record for the Portland Chamber of Commerce Visitors Information Center, designed by John Yeon (1945). The firm was responsible for the design of the School of Music (1949) and Commonwealth Hall (1951) at the University of Oregon and the Wolverton Memorial Pool at the Oregon College of Education (1955). In addition to designing the Applegate Elementary School, the firm was responsible for additions for Astor, Chief Joseph, and Faubion Schools (Ritz 2003: 178-179, 424-425).

Although Applegate School retains its integrity with its floor plan and many exterior and interior finishes appear 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 schools. The school therefore, is not eligible for the NRHP under Criterion A. Although designed by a successful architecture firm in Portland, archival research does not indicate that the school was a major commission. Although the building exhibits some elements of the Northwest Regional style and mid-twentieth century school design, in comparison with other schools built during this period in Portland, Applegate Elementary School is not a strong example of the type or the style that would be 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: 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 Chronology Binder.

Portland Public Schools. *Repairing, Rehabilitating and Modernizing the School Plant*. Portland: Portland Public Schools. Office of the Superintendent, 1945.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Applegate Elementary School. Facility Profile*.

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

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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.



North elevation facing south



East Elevation



South elevation



Portable facing northwest



West elevation

**Applegate School  
Exterior Photos  
ENTRIX, 2009**



Corridor outside of office



Gymnasium facing east



Classroom built-in



Boiler

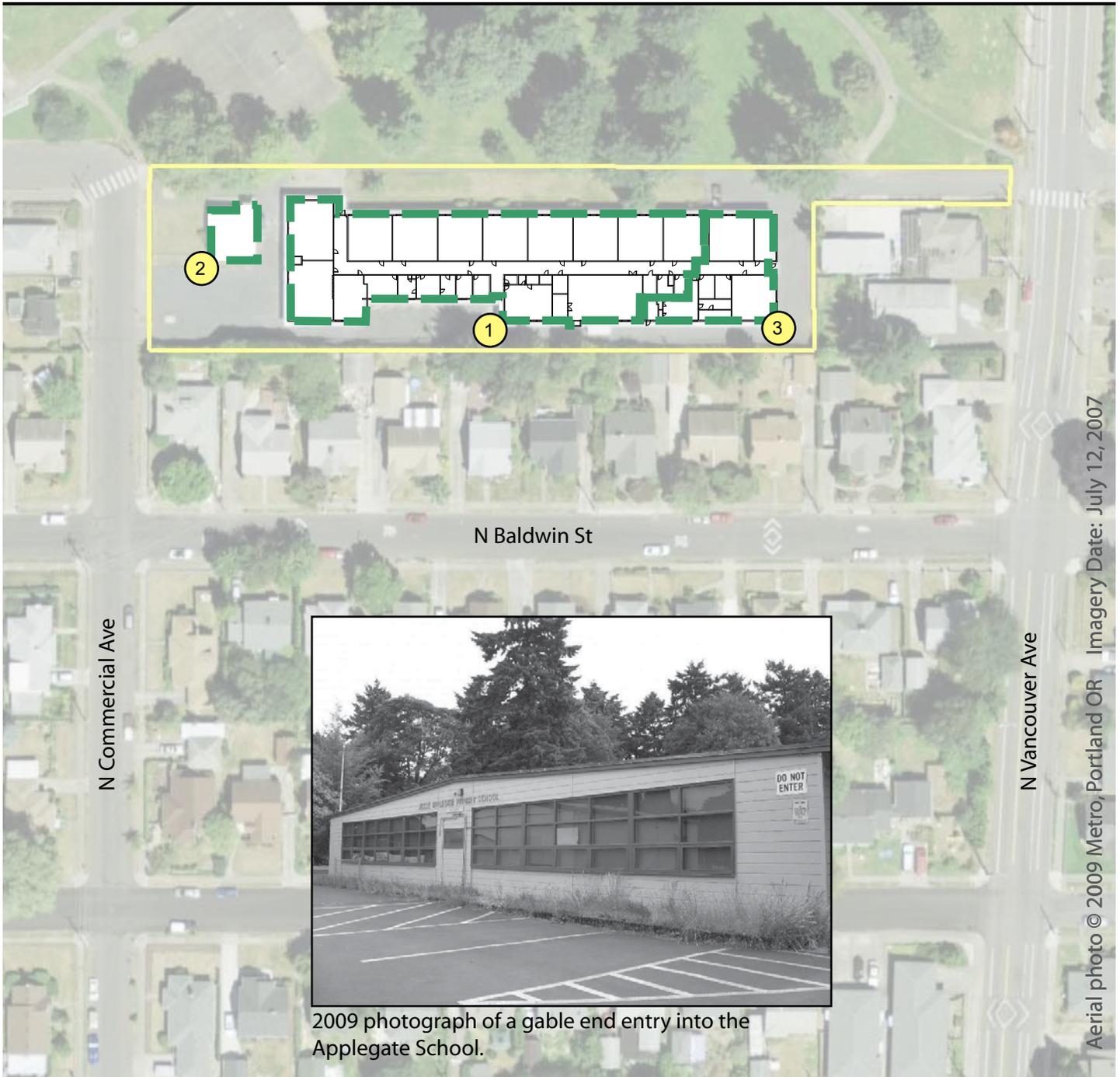


Corridor facing west

# Applegate Facility

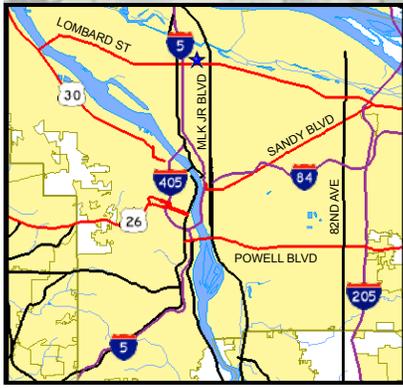
7650 N Commercial Ave, Portland OR, 97217

[View Site in Google Maps](#)



Aerial photo © 2009 Metro, Portland OR Imagery Date: July 12, 2007

2009 photograph of a gable end entry into the Applegate School.



## Historical Significance and Building Integrity

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

## Building Periods

1. Main Building (134A), 1954
2. Portable Classroom (134P), 1969
3. Classroom Add. (134C), 1990

