

Oregon Historic Site Form

Boise-Eliot School
620 Fremont St
Portland, Multnomah County

LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME

address: 620 N Fremont St appr. addr

Portland vcnty Multnomah County

Optional Information
 assoc addresses:
 (former addresses, intersections, etc.)
 location descr:
 (remote sites)

historic name: Boise-Eliot School

current/
 other names: Boise-Eliot Elementary School, Fremont School

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: 1926 (c.) secondary date: _____ (c.)
 (optional--use for major addns)

primary orig use: School

secondary orig use: _____

primary style: Classical Revival: other

secondary style: Late Gothic Revival

primary siding: Standard Brick

secondary siding: Cast Stone

plan type: School (General)

total # eligible resources: 0 total # ineligible resources: 3

NR status: _____
 NR date listed: _____ (indiv listed only; see Grouping for hist dist)

orig use comments: _____

prim style comments: _____

sec style comments: Some Collegiate Gothic detailing

siding comments: _____

architect: Jones, George H.

builder: _____

comments/notes: HRI Rank II.

GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS

survey project name or other grouping name: PPS Historic Building Assessment 2009 Survey & Inventory Project

farmstead/cluster name: _____ external site #: 141
 (ID# used in city/agency database)

SHPO INFO FOR THIS PROPERTY

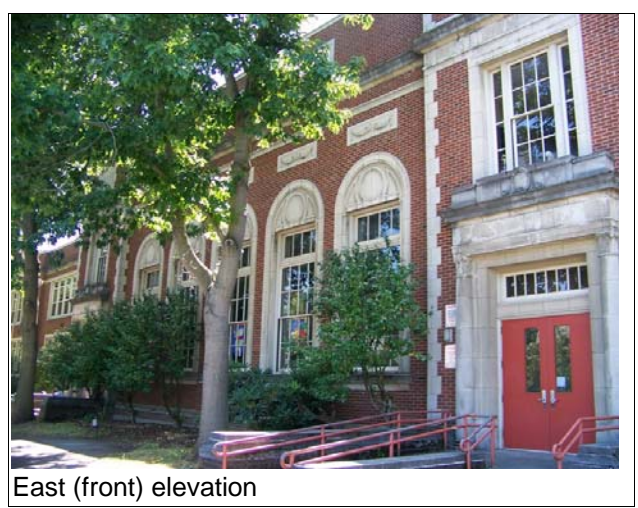
NR date listed: _____

ILS survey date: 7/22/2009

RLS survey date: 7/22/2009

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

Boise-Eliot Elementary School is a two story reinforced concrete building with brick veneer designed in the Classical Revival style. The campus consists of a U-shaped building (141A), a concrete block storage shed (141C), and a covered play shed (141B). Constructed in 1927, the school exhibits extensive use of cast-stone ornamentation to express its Classical Revival style. The school features projecting bays, bay windows, and bands of vinyl sash windows that are arranged symmetrically. The front entrances are located along a central projecting bay and accentuated with pediments, columns, and decorative panels. These classical elements, in addition to the building's symmetry, serve to reinforce the ideals of order, balance, and formality.

Architectural Description

Boise-Eliot Elementary School is located in the Boise neighborhood of north Portland at 620 NE Fremont Street. The neighborhood consists of a mix of single family residences, multi-story apartments, and commercial buildings built primarily between 1910 and 1950 (Sanborn Map 1924-1928; Sanborn Map 1908-Dec. 1950). The Boise-Eliot campus occupies one-and-one-half city blocks and part of a right-of-way. The school is located on the north end of the campus, with play areas and open space on the south end of the campus, and parking is provided on the west end of the campus. A covered play shed (1980) and a concrete block storage building (1990) are located to the south of the primary building.

The 1926 Boise-Eliot Elementary School has a U-shaped plan. The primary entrances flank the central projecting bay that serves as the media center. A parallel bay that houses the gymnasium is located at the rear of the school. Rectangular classrooms and administrative offices comprise the other spaces located along the U-shaped corridor.

The two-story Classical Revival building is constructed of reinforced concrete with brick veneer arranged in a running bond pattern. The building features a series of flat roofs with stone coping along the parapet. The brick walls are interrupted by a series of projecting horizontal elements that include cast-stone cornices, belt-courses, and concrete water tables. Bands of single hung vinyl sash windows provide the fenestration. The building rests on a poured concrete foundation.

The most important expression of the building's Classical Revival style lies on the north (front) elevation of the building. To emphasize the importance of the primary (north) elevation, a projecting central bay features five multi-pane wood sash windows that are framed in cast-stone. Above the windows are stone panels with garlands and a large panel that bears the school's name. Front entrances are located on bays that project out further from the central bay; the entrance bays are marked by quoins and panels with decorative and inspirational quotations. Entrances are accentuated by columns, full entablatures, and transoms. Above the cornice of the entablature is a decorative scroll and double hung wood sash window that is framed in cast stone. A decorative panel with inspirational quotation and balustrade completes the top of the entrance bays.

While less ornate, the east and west (side) entrances are similar in design and ornamentation to the front entrances. Side entrances are located on two-story bays and accentuated by pilasters and simple entablatures that bear the school's name. Above the cornice of the entablature are double hung wood sash windows. A decorative panel with two branches tied together with ribbon completes the top of the side entrance bays. Entrances at the rear of the building are marked by stone surrounds.

Other significant character defining features include bay windows; one window is located on the east (side) elevation and the other is located on the west (side) elevation. The bays feature stone coping at the parapet and decorative panels with a side profile of a child. The side elevations also feature decorative brickwork along the east (front) ends.

The principal entrances located along the north (front) and east and west (side) elevations open into stairwells that are illuminated by the windows that cap the entry doors. The corridors and classrooms have not retained their original wood trim; however, wood molding along the staircase walls and wooden staircase handrails are largely intact. Ceilings throughout the building have been reconstructed with drop panels and recessed fluorescent light fixtures. Wood doors with center or rectangular side windows provide access to the classrooms. Flooring consists of concrete, linoleum tiles, and carpeting.

The classrooms feature a rectangular plan with a recessed area that provides closet space. None of the classrooms retain their original built-ins. Classroom windows line the exterior walls and retain their wood surrounds. The building is heated by boilers located in the basement. Classrooms and other spaces are heated through grates located beneath windows.

Alterations/ Integrity

Boise-Eliot Elementary School has been modified over time to accommodate new uses. Alterations include the addition of a kitchen to the south (rear) of the gymnasium and the associated reconfiguration of the girl's gymnasium to provide fold-down tables for cafeteria space (1952), and the addition of a girl's locker room (1966). Interior alterations were made to the boy's locker room (1964), home economics room (1965), basement classroom (1970), and first floor classrooms (1978). The most extensive modifications to the building took place from 1983-1985, during which time the auditorium was reconfigured into the school's media center, the administrative offices were reconfigured, and the corridors were reconfigured to provide common areas and classroom storage space. The original floor tiles, interior doors, lighting fixtures, and classroom built-ins were also replaced during the remodel. In 1994, the original six-over-six double hung wood sash windows were replaced with single hung vinyl sash windows (Boise Eliot Facility Plan, Boise Eliot Facility Profile).

Two ancillary structures are located to the south of the primary facility. A covered play shed was constructed in the 1980s and a concrete block storage building was constructed in 1990. The storage building features glass block windows and a flat roof with sheet metal coping along the

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parapet. While these structures are associated with the development of the Boise-Eliot campus, they are not associated with the development of the 1926 primary building; therefore, these structures are non-contributing (not significant) resources.

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 1926, Boise-Eliot Elementary School was constructed during a period of progressive era growth that responded to changing city demographics and ideas concerning safety, sanitation, and child centered instruction (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 existing classroom capacity and existing schools could not effectively serve areas of the city with new residential development (Cubberley 1915: 283-285, 288-290). Boise-Eliot, originally named Ruben P. Boise Grammar School, was constructed to replace the Thompson and Shaver school structures (Oregonian 6-4-1927).

Portland Public Schools (PPS) District Architect, George Jones, designed Boise-Eliot School. George Jones was one of the most influential district architects. Jones along with Floyd Naramore designed a large majority of the schools built between 1908 and 1932. Beginning in 1908 with the emergence of the Bureau of Properties, PPS district architects took on a more formalized role in the design and maintenance of school facilities. The Bureau of Properties was created by PPS to centralize management of the district's properties (Powers and Corning 1937: 182).

For the Boise-Eliot School, George Jones adopted the building program and principles that dominated the discourse for school design during the first half of the twentieth century. After several well-publicized school fires in U.S. cities, calls for a more fundamental change in the building construction began as early as 1906 (Oregonian 10-31-1906). Many of Portland's new fire proof buildings, such as Boise-Eliot, were constructed of brick and concrete. The school is similar in plan to the two-story U-shaped schools that were constructed with a lateral corridor connected to the front entrance by one or more short hallways. Like other PPS buildings constructed during this period, Boise-Eliot contained more differentiated and increasingly specialized space (Powers and Corning 1937: 182). The school included rooms for Home Economics, Art, Science, Nature Study, Music, Geography and Manuel Training, as well as boy's and girl's gymnasiums and an auditorium (PPS Building Plans 1928).

Contractor H.E. Doering was retained to construct the school for approximately \$290,000 using Oregon building materials (Oregonian 6-4-1927). A ceremony held for the laying of the cornerstone was reported on in the June 4th 1927 edition of the Morning Oregonian.

Boise-Eliot School was constructed in the Classical Revival style popular for educational buildings during the first half of the twentieth-century. This style, characterized by symmetry and classical details such as cornices, pilasters, columns, quoins, and round-arch or square multi-paned windows, is well suited to portray the civic stature of schools of this period. Architectural revivals such as Classical Revival, Colonial Revival, and Collegiate Gothic were viewed as inspirational and appropriate for educational settings (Betelle 1919:28; Sibley 1923:66; Patton 1967:1-8).

While Boise-Eliot Elementary School is a notable historic resource, it does not retain a level of historical integrity commensurate with other Portland schools constructed during the same period; therefore, it is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). While the Classical Revival style is clearly discernable on the building, alterations have diminished the building's integrity of materials, design, and feeling. These alterations include the reconfiguration of the auditorium, hallways, and administrative offices, as well as the removal of the original windows, ceiling tiles, floor tiles, lighting fixtures, doors, and classroom built-ins. Due to the loss of integrity, Boise-Eliot Elementary 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

Betelle, James O. "Architectural Styles as Applied to School Buildings." American School Board Journal. Vol. 58 (April 1919).

Cremin, Lawrence. The Transformation of the School: Progressivism in American Education, 1876-1957. New York: A. Knopf, 1961.

Cubberley, Ellwood Patterson. The Portland Survey: A Textbook on City School Administration Based on a Concrete Study. Yonkers-on-Hudson, NY: World Book Co., 1915.

Oregonian. "Mayor Lane and the Schools." 10-31-1906.

Oregonian. "Cornerstones Laid for 2 New Schools." 6-4-1927.

Patton, Glenn. "American Collegiate Gothic: A Phase of University Architectural Development." Journal of Higher Education. Vol. 38, No.

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1 (January, 1967).

Portland Public Schools. School Chronology Binder. PPS Archives, Portland, Oregon.

_____. Boise-Eliot Facility Plan.

_____. Boise-Eliot Facility Profile.

Powers, Alfred and Howard McKinley Corning, History of Education in Portland. [Portland]: Work Projects Administration, 1937.

Rippa, Alexander. Education in a Free Society: An American History. New York: Longman, 1997.

Sanborn Map Company

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.

Sibley, Ernest. "Why I Prefer the Colonial Style." School Board Journal: Vol. 66 (January 1923).



North (front) elevation



South (rear) elevation



North elevation



East elevation



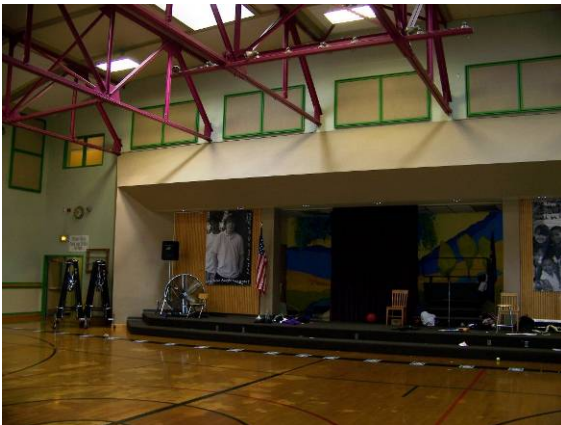
West elevation



Media center (originally the auditorium)



Second floor common area (constructed 1980)



Gymnasium (with 1980 stage addition)



Second floor staircase.

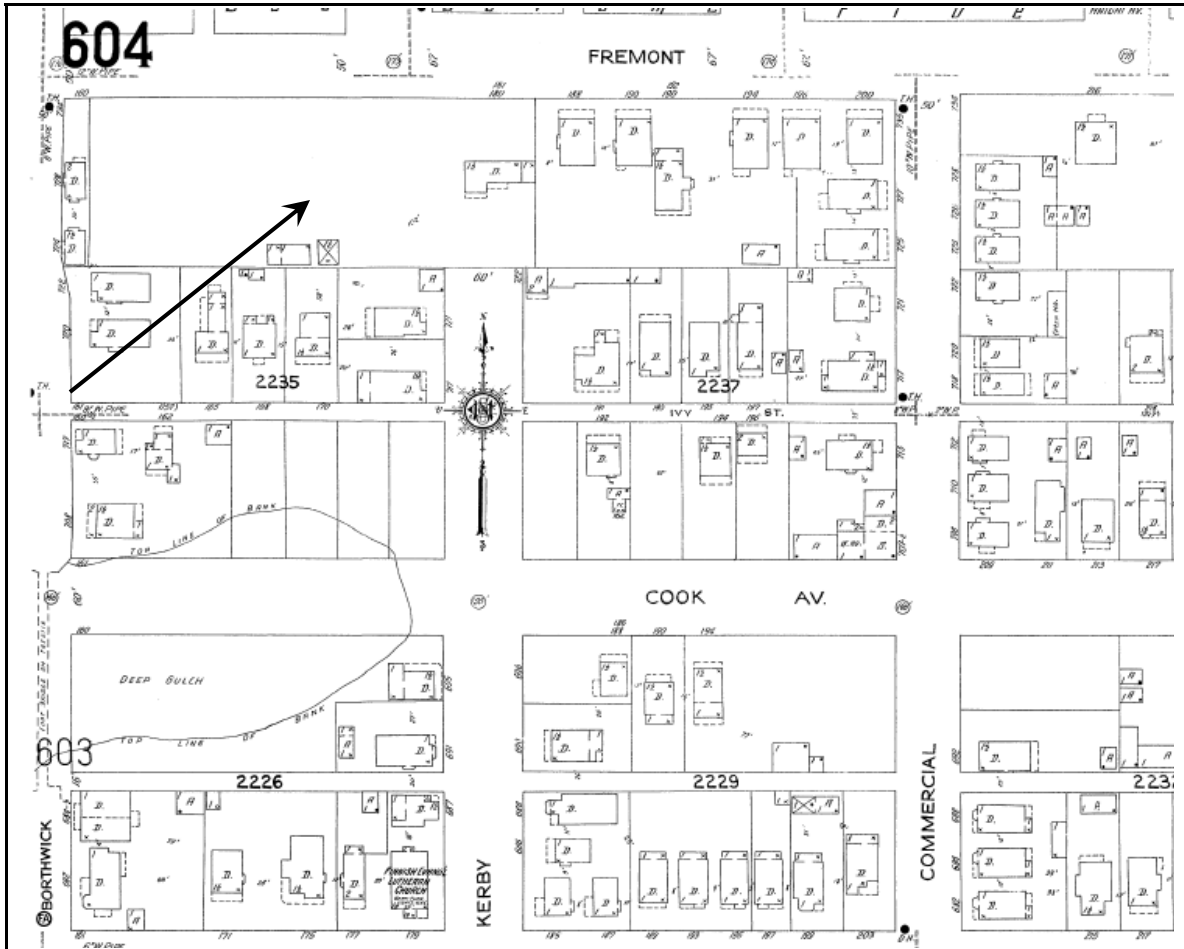


First floor classroom



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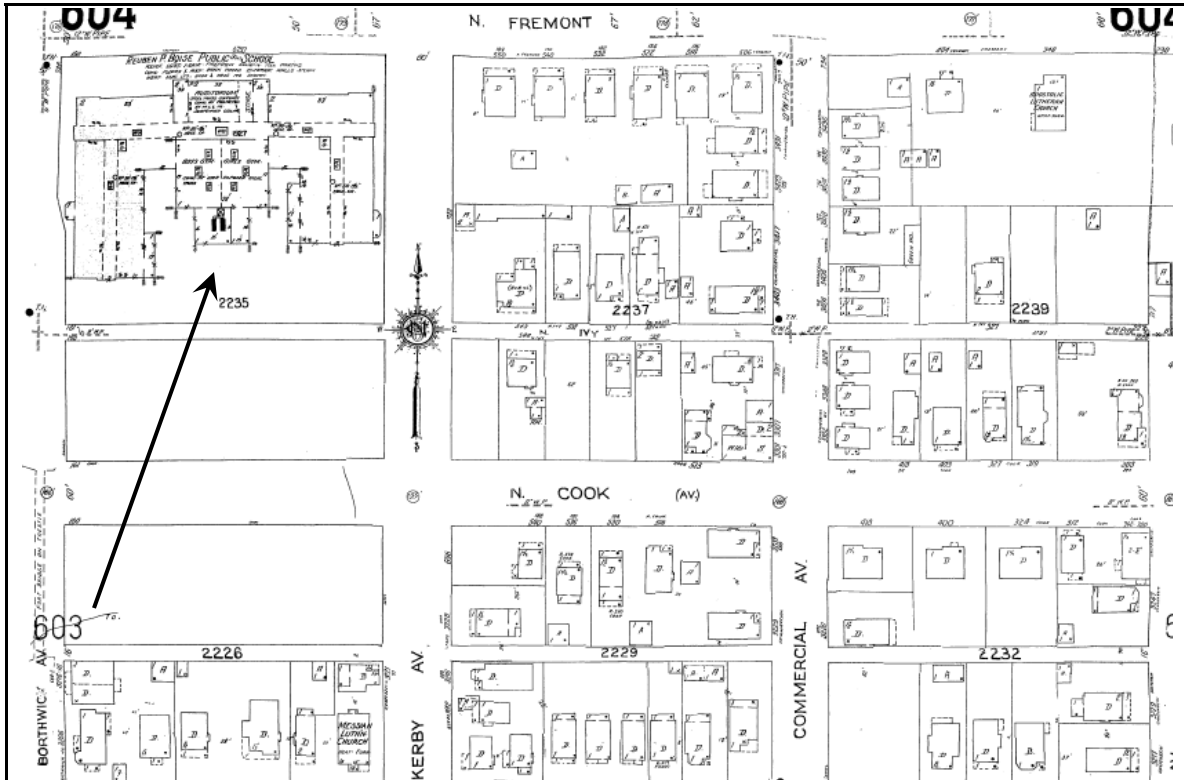


1924-1928 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Portland, Oregon, Map 604. Arrow points to the future location of Rueben P. Boise Public School.



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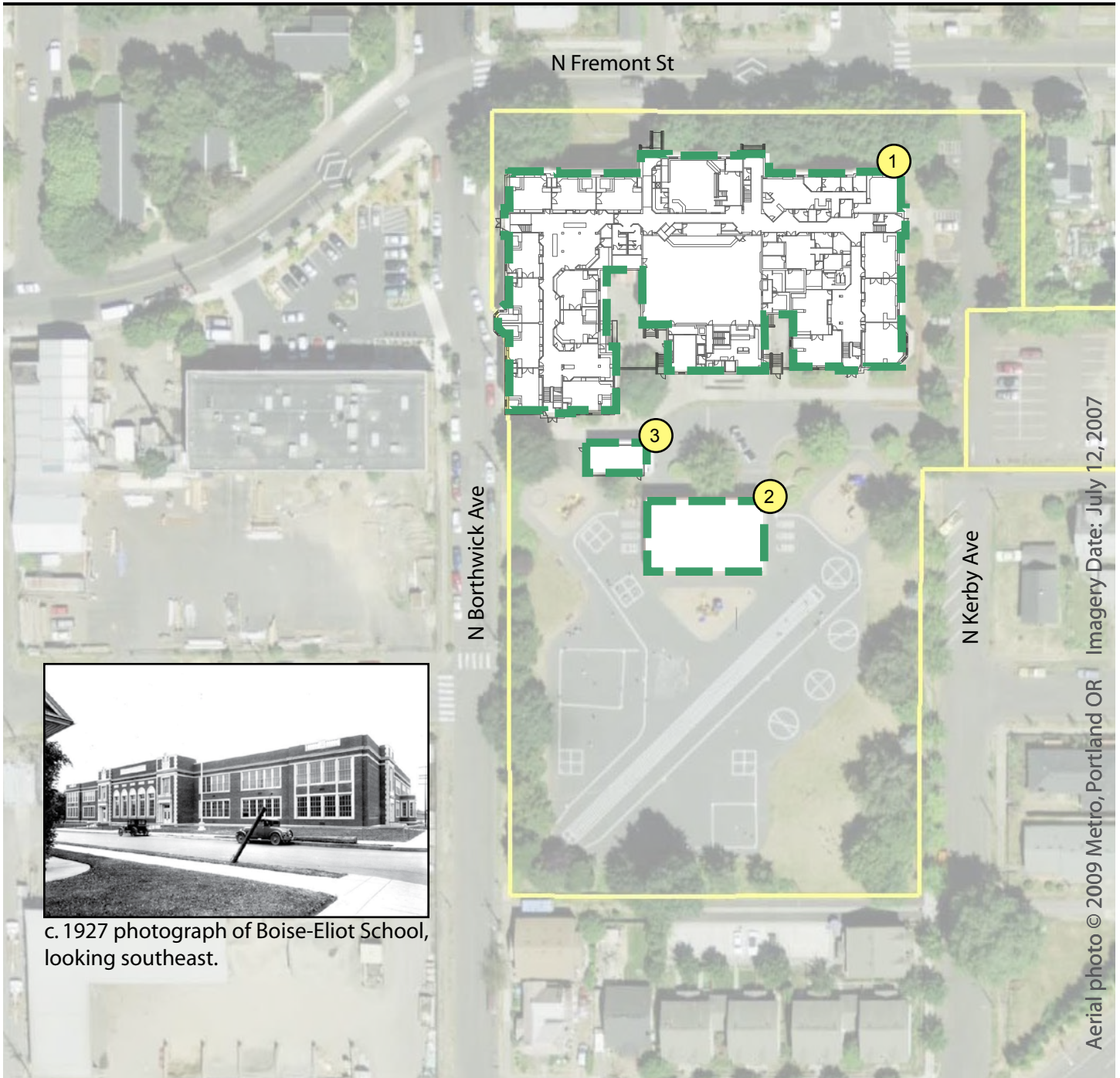


Updated to 1950, Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Portland, Oregon, Map 604.
Arrow points to Rueben P. Boise Public School. Note the street change and the removal of the houses that were once situated on the property.

Boise-Eliot School

620 N Fremont St, Portland OR, 97227

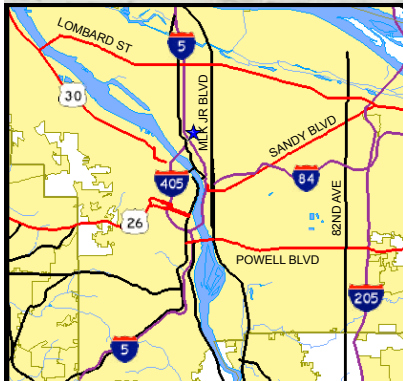
[View Site in Google Maps](#)






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



c. 1927 photograph of Boise-Eliot School, looking southeast.



Historical Significance and Building Integrity

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



Building Periods

1. Main Building (141A), 1926
2. Play Shed (141B), 1986
3. Storage Building (141C), 1990