Oregon Historic Site Form

LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME

address: **7528 N Fenwick** ☐ apprx. addrs

Portland ☐ vcnty **Multnomah County**

historic name: **Kenton School**

current/ other names: **Kenton Middle School**

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: **Building** height (# stories): **3**

total # eligible resources: **1** total # ineligible resources: **3**

elig. evaluation: **eligible/significant**

NR status: ____

primary constr date: **1913** (c.) ☐ secondary date: **1928** (c.) ☐
(optional--use for major addns)

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

primary orig use: **School**

secondary orig use: ____

orig use comments: ____

primary style: **Mediterranean Revival**

secondary style: ____

prim style comments: ____

sec style comments: ____

primary siding: **Standard Brick**

secondary siding: **Terra Cotta: Other/Undefined**

siding comments: ____

plan type: **School (General)**

architect: **Naramore, F A**

builder: ____

comments/notes: **HRI Rank II. Kenton Conservation District - Contributing Resource.**

GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS

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

farmstead/cluster name:

external site #: 168
(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)

West elevation.

ARCHITECTURAL / PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

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

Description Summary

Kenton Elementary School is located at 7528 N Fenwick Street in the Kenton neighborhood of north Portland. The four acre campus includes a primary, two story building and three portables. Exhibiting modest architectural design elements inspired by the Mediterranean Revival style, the 1913 school features glazed terra cotta coping, belt cornice, cartouches, window surrounds, and cap for the poured concrete water table. Red brick provides the primary cladding for the reinforced concrete structure. The school is covered by a flat roof. Fenestration consists of a mixture of original wood frame and grouped aluminum frame windows typically arranged in vertically symmetrical units on the primary two story building.

Architectural Description

Kenton School is situated in the Kenton neighborhood of North Portland. The campus occupies a 4 acre, rectangular parcel on the north side of Lombard Avenue. Development in the surrounding area consists primarily of single family residences built between1900-1950 (Sanborn Maps 1924-1928, 1908-1950 updated). More recent development includes multi-family buildings and commercial businesses are located on the arterial streets within the vicinity of the school particularly on the south side of Lombard and along Interstate Avenue to the east.

The campus consists of a primary rectangular shaped building (168A) with an attached gymnasium and auditorium (168B) and three portables (168P1, 168P2, 168P3) located at the south side of the property. Two courtyards divide the primary building into an east and west wing that are connected by covered walkways. Recreation facilities include an asphalt covered playground and play fields on the east side of the property. A U-shaped concrete staircase, features a bas relief terra cotta panel near the sidewalk and provides access to the primary entrance on the west side of the school.

Red brick laid in an all stretcher bond provides the primary cladding for the reinforced concrete structure. A modest change in the color of the brickwork and mortar on the west elevation indicates the location of the north addition erected in 1922-1923. The rectangular mass rests on a poured concrete foundation. The school is covered by a flat roof that is obscured by a false parapet that rises above the roof level. The fenestration consists of a mixture of original wood frame and grouped aluminum frame windows. While most of the windows on the 1913 and 1922-1923 units of the school have been replaced with aluminum frame windows, most of the wood frame windows on the auditorium and gymnasium have been retained although they are covered with metal grates.

Designed with modest Mediterranean-Revival detailing, the 1913 school features brick dentils as well as glazed terra cotta coping, belt cornice, cartouches, clamshells, window surrounds, and cap for the poured concrete water table. Additional terra cotta detailing highlights the entrances to the building. The north entry features a double height multi light wood window surrounded by terra cotta. A terra cotta cartouche inscribed with the letter K caps the window. The principal Mediterranean Revival style detailing consists of a group of three arched double hung wood windows that define the west entry to the primary wing of the building. The two middle terra cotta arches spring from partially engaged, twisted columns with stylized capitals. These openings are topped by a square panel of brickwork circumscribed by brick headers and whose field is laid in the English bond.

The west elevation is further emphasized between the ground level and watertable where banded brickwork simulates rustication and differentiates the lower wall surface from the comparably flat main exterior walls. The main exterior entrance of the auditorium, located on the south elevation, features a projecting brick entry with three semi-circular arched openings capped by terra cotta keystones. A panel of terra cotta inscribed with the word “Auditorium” caps the entry. All of the banks of windows are circumscribed by vertically set headers with terra cotta paterae at the corners.

The west wing of the primary building is organized around a central double loaded corridor. The majority of classrooms are located on the west and east sides with administrative and shared facilities located at the center of the building. Connection to the gymnasium and auditorium is provided through corridors that run east-west. Flooring throughout the buildings consists of 12” x 12” tiles, concrete, carpet, and hardwood with wood baseboards. Newer round fixtures are suspended from an acoustic tile clad ceiling. The doors are a mixture of replacement wood and steel.

The primary public spaces include the media center, gymnasium, and auditorium. The media center is located on the second floor. The auditorium is located on the southeast side of the building. The room retains its state, seating, and boxed beam ceiling. The gymnasium is located on the northeast side of the school.

The majority of the classrooms are rectangular with ample light provided by windows on the exterior wall. Many classrooms feature original woodwork including built-in cabinetry, flooring, blackboards, and window and surrounds. The flooring is concrete and 12” x 12” tile. Tubular fluorescent light fixtures are suspended from the acoustic tile ceiling.

The boilers that provide heat for the building are located in the basement. Heat is conducted through ducts to the individual classrooms where the air is brought in through a wire grill.

Alterations

Designed to be expanded over time, Kenton School has gradually evolved since the construction of the first building unit in 1913. An additional “unit” of 4 classrooms was added to the north side of the school in 1922-1923, but no corresponding unit was ever constructed on the south side. The south wall consisted of unfinished concrete even after the 1922-1923 addition in anticipation of additional expansion. In 1928 the gymnasium and auditorium wings and the covered walkways were added. To accommodate the growing numbers of school children in the neighborhood after World War II, two nearly identical portable buildings were added in 1947 and an additional portable was erected in 1948. The three frame buildings are clad with horizontal clapboard and the hipped roofs are sheathed with raised seam metal. Kitchen facilities were added at the north side of the

gymnasium in 1954.

Other alterations include changes to the lighting, the addition of acoustic ceiling tiles in 1958, changes to the flooring in 1986, and the enclosure of staircases to comply with fire codes. The media center was remodeled in 1984. Many of the windows were replaced in 1985. Classrooms have also been subdivided with partition walls to create office space. The corridors have also been recently modified to provide a new reception area. Newer lighting fixtures were recently installed in the 2nd floor corridors.

Despite the changes to the windows and interior alterations, Kenton Schools retains its integrity. The additions follow the original plan for an extensible school built in units and contribute to the significance of the property. The school is a good example of a partially developed unit plan school

HISTORY

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

Statement of Significance

Constructed in 1913, Kenton School was part of a dramatic building program begun by Portland Public Schools in the early 1900s. Gradually influenced by John Dewey's Progressive Education Movement, 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 existing classroom capacity and existing schools could not effectively serve areas of the city where new residential development was occurring (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, as well as 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). Between the onset of the Great Depression in 1929 and World War II in 1941, few schools were constructed in Portland, although several schools were recipients of Works Progress Administration funding for artwork, additions, system updates, and playground improvements.

The architect of Kenton School, Floyd Archibald Naramore, was adept in the requirements of school design from his tenure as architect and superintendent of school properties for Portland Public Schools. A native of Illinois, Naramore attended the University of Wisconsin and graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1907. Naramore's first employment after his arrival in Portland in 1909 was as an engineer for the Northwest Bridge Works. In 1912 Naramore began his tenure at Portland Public Schools, which would continue until 1919. During this period, Naramore designed 16 schools for the district including the Kennedy School, which gained notoriety as a single story response to the issue of fire safety in American public schools (Evening Telegram 11-03-1915).

Naramore's success with Portland Public Schools led to a similar position in Seattle, where he designed many of the city's most renowned schools. Architect Victor Steinbrueck, credits Naramore for producing the best quality Motor Age architecture in the Puget Sound area (Vaughan and Feriday; Space Style and Structure, 1974: 508). Naramore subsequently founded several private architectural partnerships in the Seattle area. The best known firm, Naramore, Bain, Brady & Johansen (or NBB&J) had early success designing large World War II building projects. In the last half century, the firm grew into one of the largest architectural practices in the world (Ritz 2003: 293).

Designed to be expanded over time, Kenton School has evolved following the unit plan developed by Naramore. The school property was acquired for $9,200.00 in 1909 and the original building was constructed in 1913 for $74,168 (PPS School Chronology Binder). Originally developed in 1911 as a company town for the Swift Meat Packing Company, Kenton grew rapidly due to the extensive meat packing facility and associated stockyards located near railroad lines (MacColl 1976: 466; Lutino 2001: E3-E6). The original Kenton school was designed as an extensible school to accommodate the continued growth of the neighborhood. An additional building unit was added in 1922-1923 to the north of the main section. Kenton expanded once again in 1928 to include a gymnasium and auditorium. The south unit was never erected but the south gable end was sheathed with brick sometime after the 1922-1923 addition (PPS Photographic Archives). The terra cotta for the 1928 unit was supplied by at least two of the largest terra cotta manufacturers in the Pacific Northwest during the period; Gladding McBean and Co. of Auburn, Washington and the Denny Renton Co. of Seattle, Washington (PPS Historic Photographs Collection). In order to accommodate the growing numbers of school children in the neighborhood after World War II, the portable buildings were added in 1947 and 1948. Kitchen facilities were added at the north side of the gymnasium in 1954.

Oregon Historic Site Form

Kenton School is a nearly complete example of the unit plan school implemented throughout Portland during the tenure of Naramore as Superintendent of Building. The major additions to the school were planned by Naramore and implemented by his successor George Howell Jones. In comparison with other Portland schools during the same period and constructed of similar styles, the building retains a high degree of integrity and is therefore eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A as an example of school planning and the use of the extensible school type to accommodate the rapidly expanding population of Portland. The school is significant as an extensible school building type and is significant under Criterion C. While the building is notable for its Mediterranean Revival style terra cotta detailing, superior examples of the style are found in other schools such as at Irvington.

RESEARCH INFORMATION

(Check all of the basic sources consulted and cite specific important sources)

- ☐ Title Records
- ☐ Census Records
- ☐ Property Tax Records
- ☑ Local Histories
- ☑ Sanborn Maps
- ☑ Biographical Sources
- ☑ SHPO Files
- ☐ Interviews
- ☐ Obituaries
- ☑ Newspapers
- ☐ State Archives
- ☑ Historic Photographs
- ☐ City Directories
- ☐ Building Permits
- ☐ State Library

Local Library: Multnomah County Library
University Library: Portland State University Library
Historical Society: Oregon Historical Society
Other Repository: PPS Archives

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. Knopt, 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.

Lutino, Cielo, et al. Historic and Architectural Properties in the early Kenton neighborhood of Portland Oregon. Multiple Property Nomination, National Register of Historic Places, 2001.

MacColl, E. Kimbark. The Shaping of a City. Portland, OR: The Georgian Press Company, 1976.

Oregonian. “Change Favored in School Buildings.” 3-31-1914.

Oregonian. “Mayor Lane and the Schools.” 10-31-1906.

Oregonian. “New Schools Rushed.” 8-31-1925.

Oregonian. “Three New Schools Ready for Opening. Other Buildings Remodeled and Painted.” 8-19-1928.

Oregonian. “School Buildings are Called Unfit.” 7-31-1910.

Patton, Glenn. “American Collegiate Gothic: A Phase of University Architectural Development.” Journal of Higher Education. Vol. 38, No. 1 (January, 1967).

Portland Public Schools. Schools Chronology Binder.

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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.

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

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).

Steinbrueck, Victor. “Everyday Architecture in the Puget Sound Area.” In Space, Style and Structure: Buildings in Northwest America. Ed. Thomas Vaughan, 500-517. Portland: Oregon Historical Society, 1974.

West elevation facing northeast

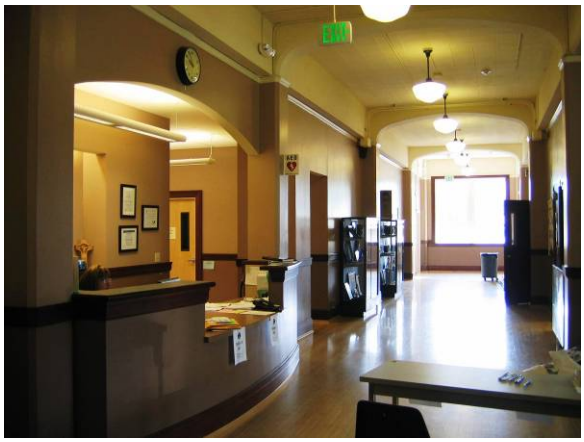
Portable facing southeast

South elevation facing northwest

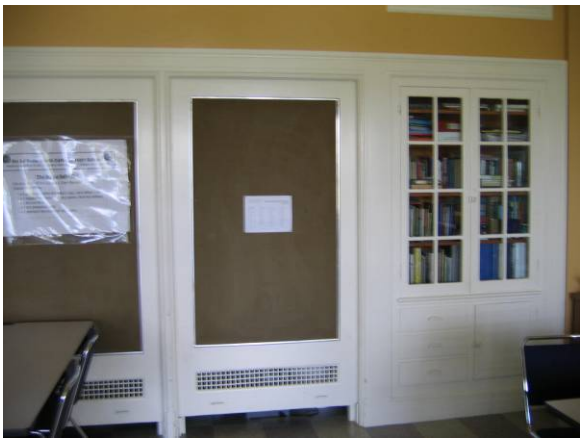
South elevation of connection between main building and the auditorium

East elevation facing southwest

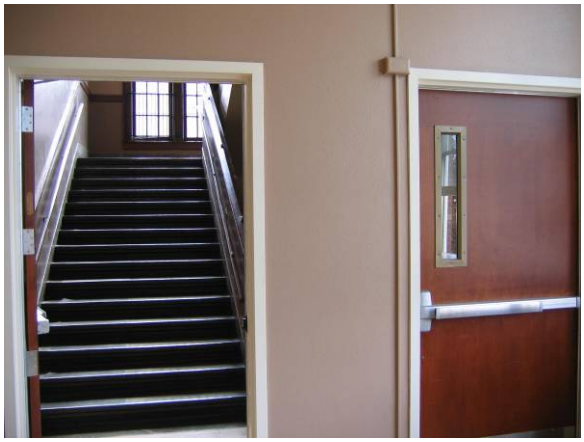
Kenton Facility
Exterior Photos
ENTRIX 2009



Corridor with inserted walls and desks



Classroom built-ins

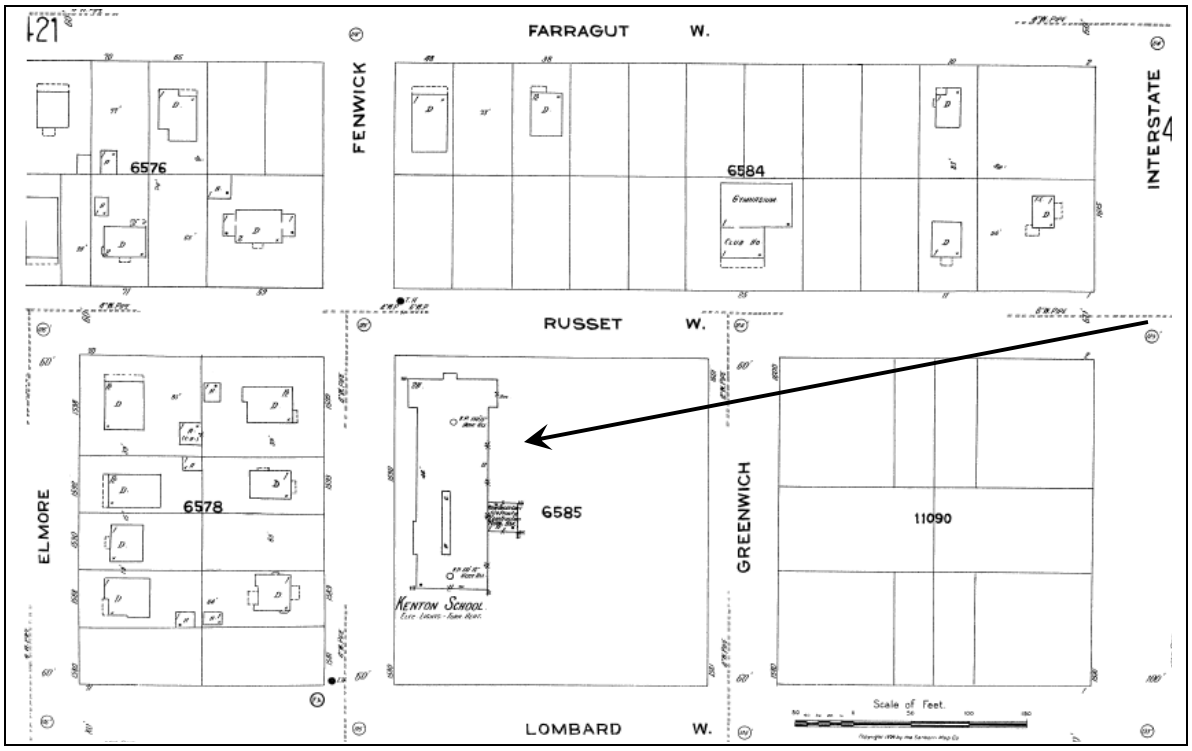


Firedoors added at staircase

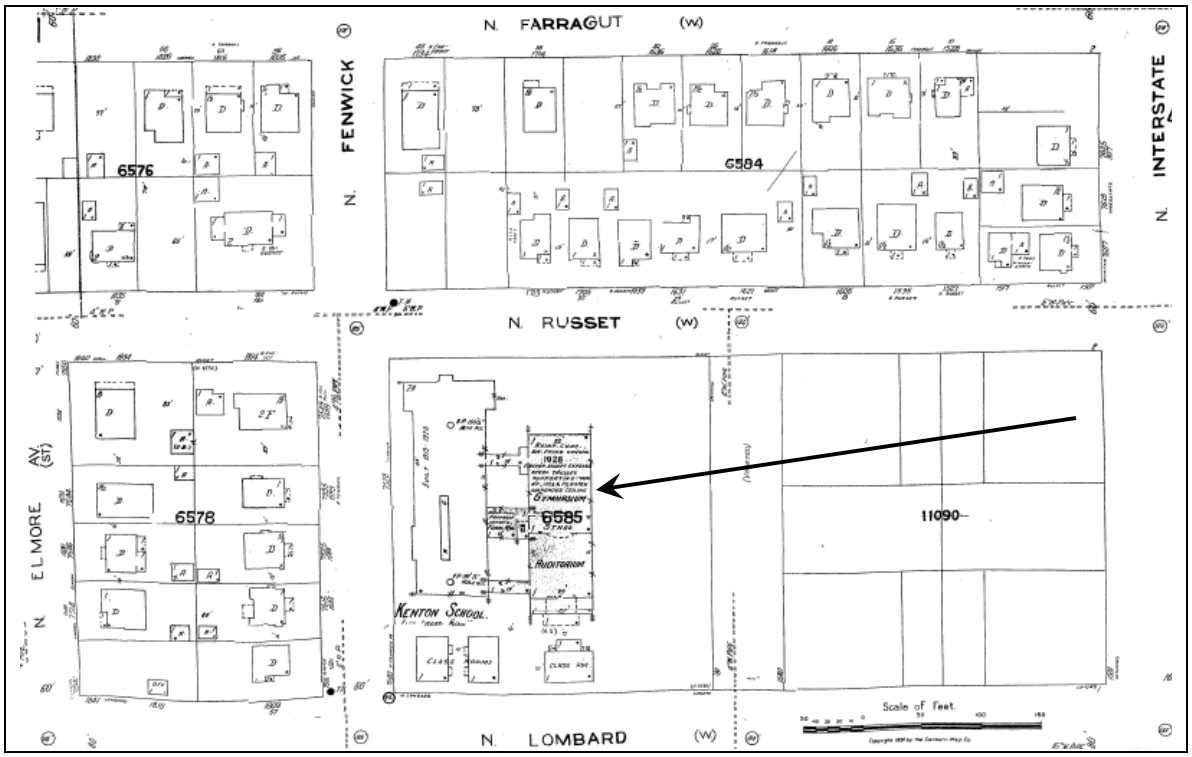
Library

Auditorium facing east

Kenton Facility
Interior Photos
ENTRIX 2009



1924-1928, Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Portland, Oregon, Map 422. Arrow points to Kenton School.

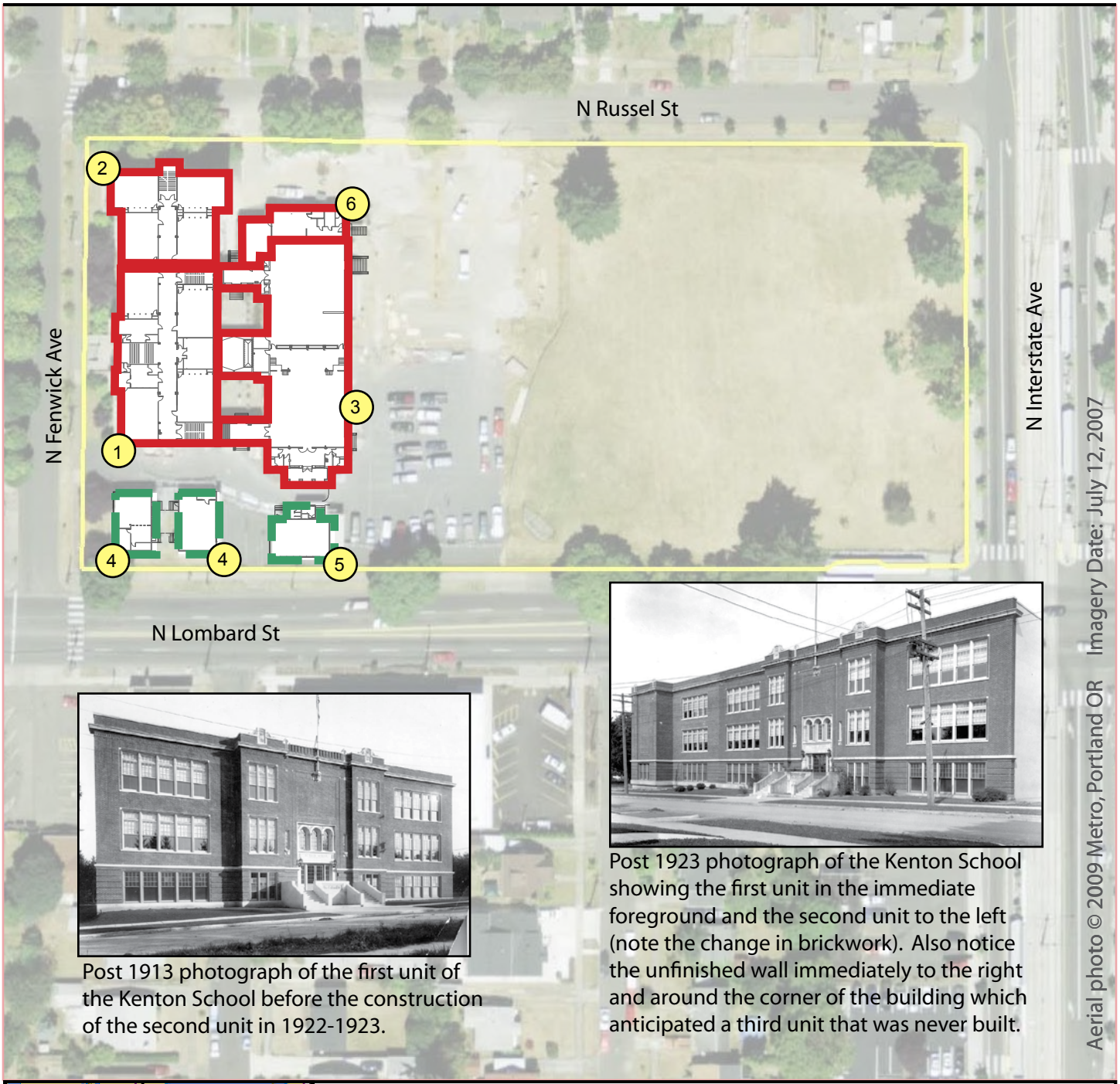


Updated to 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Portland, Oregon, Map 422. Arrow points to Kenton School.

Kenton Facility

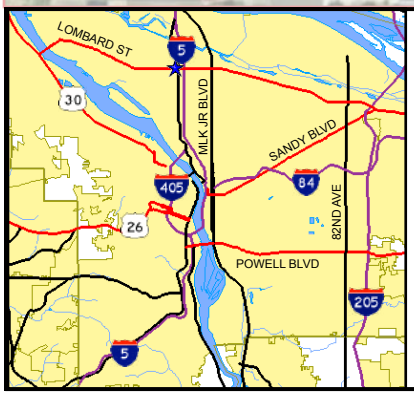
7528 N Fenwick Ave, Portland OR, 97217

View Site in Google Maps



Post 1913 photograph of the first unit of the Kenton School before the construction of the second unit in 1922-1923.

Post 1923 photograph of the Kenton School showing the first unit in the immediate foreground and the second unit to the left (note the change in brickwork). Also notice the unfinished wall immediately to the right and around the corner of the building which anticipated a third unit that was never built.



Historical Significance and Building Integrity

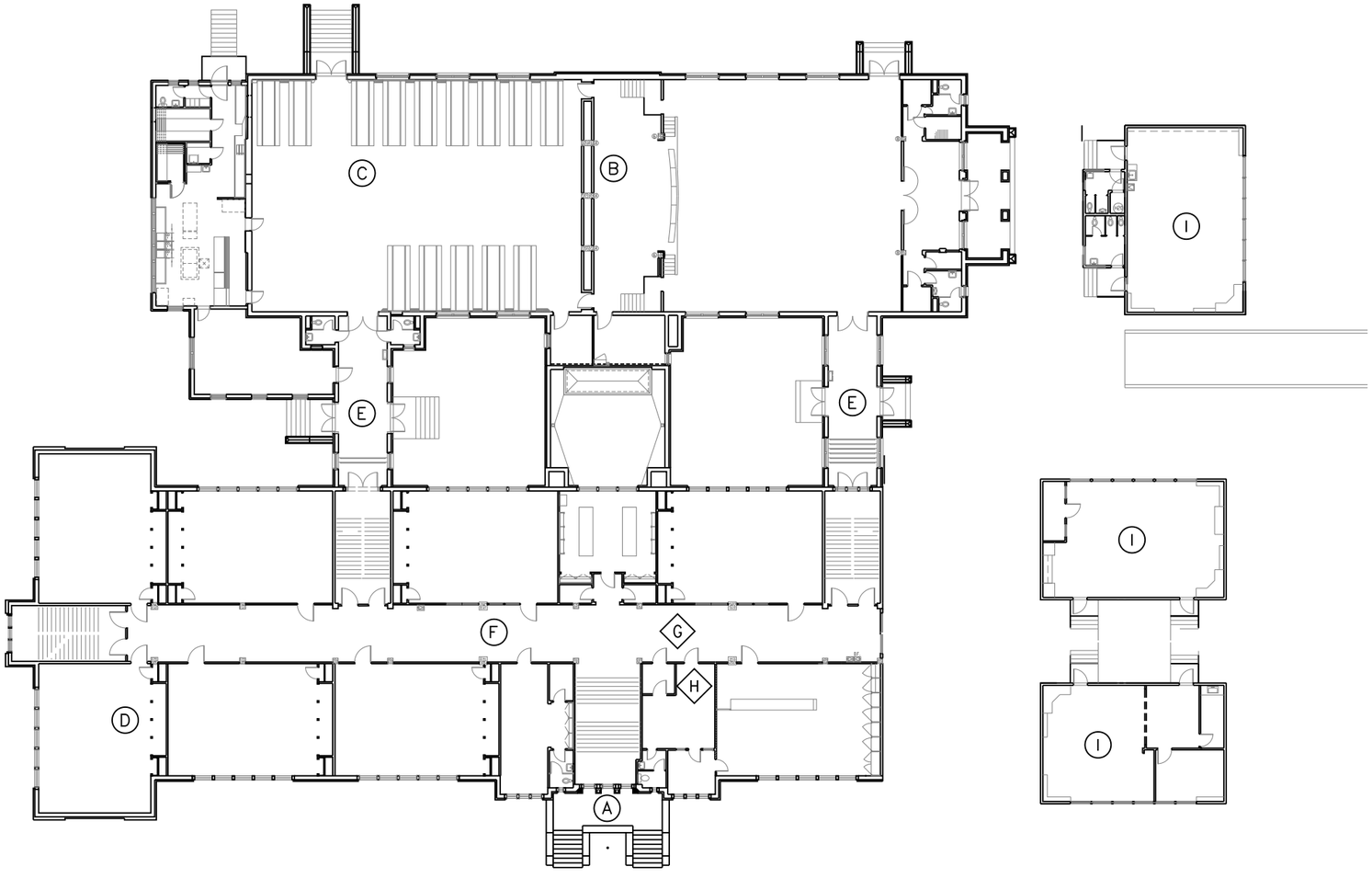
- Contrib: High Significance
- Contrib: Moderate Signif.
- Non-Contributing

N

0’ 50’ 100’ 200’

Building Periods

1. Original Building (168A), 1913
2. Addition (168A), 1922
3. Addition (168B), 1928
4. Addition (168P1, 168P2), 1947
5. Addition (168P3), 1948
6. Addition (168B), 1954



KEYNOTES:

- (A) A U-SHAPED STAIRCASE LEADS TO A CONCRETE WAITING AREA IN FRONT OF THE ENTRY TO KENTON SCHOOL. THE PAIR OF ENTRY DOORS IS SLIGHTLY RECESSED BETWEEN TWO PROJECTING BAYS. THE ENTRY IS FURTHER DISTINGUISHED BY A GROUP OF THREE CAST STONE ARCHED OPENINGS.
- (B) THE AUDITORIUM WAS ADDED TO THE SCHOOL IN 1928. THE AUDITORIUM RETAINS ITS ORIGINAL STAGE, CURTAINS, BOXED CEILING, AND SEATS.
- (C) THE GYMNASIUM, ALSO PART OF THE 1928 ADDITION, FEATURES FOLDING BENCHES AND TABLES THAT RECESS INTO THE WALLS.
- (D) 4 CLASSROOMS WERE ADDED TO THIS WING IN 1922.
- (E) AN ENCLOSED PASSAGEWAY CONNECTS THE AUDITORIUM TO THE MAIN SCHOOL BUILDING.
- (F) THE CORRIDOR WAS SLIGHTLY MODIFIED TO CREATE A CURVING RECEPTION DESK IN A RECENT REMODEL.
- (G) SKYLIGHTS PROVIDE ILLUMINATION TO THE 2ND FLOOR CORRIDOR.
- (H) THE SECOND FLOOR LIBRARY WAS RECENTLY REMODELED AND FEATURES NEW CARPET, CASEWORK, AND LIGHTING.
- (I) PORTABLE CLASSROOMS

GENERAL NOTES:

1. THREE PORTABLES WERE ADDED IN 1947/1948.
2. THE INTERIOR OF THE SCHOOLS MANY ORIGINAL FEATURES INCLUDING THE CLASSROOM BUILT-INS, MOLDINGS, AND HANDRAILS IN THE STAIRWELLS.
3. THE FENESTRATION CONSISTS MOSTLY OF REPLACEMENT METAL FRAME WINDOWS.
4. THE CLASSICAL REVIVAL STYLE SCHOOL IS DISTINGUISHED BY GLAZED TERRA COTTA COPING, BELT CORNICE, CARTOUCHES, WINDOW SURROUNDS, AND CAP FOR THE POURED CONCRETE WATER TABLE.

1 KENTON ELEMENTARY – 1ST FLOOR

SCALE: 1" = 30'-0"

N

PPS

KENTON ELEMENTARY – 168

7528 N FENWICK AVE 97217

PPS HISTORIC ASSESSMENT

ENTRIX
Down to Earth. Down to Business.™

FAT PENCIL STUDIO

DRAWING: ANNOTATED PLAN

DATE: Sept. 4, 2009