

Oregon Historic Site Form

Rigler School
5401 Prescott St
Portland, Multnomah County

LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME

address: 5401 NE Prescott St apprx. addr

Portland vcnty Multnomah County

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

historic name: Rigler School

current/
 other names: Rigler Elementary School

block nbr: _____ lot nbr: _____ tax lot nbr: _____
 township: _____ range: _____ section: _____ 1/4: _____
 zip: _____

PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS

resource type: Building height (# stories): 2

elig. evaluation: eligible/significant

primary constr date: 1931 (c.) secondary date: _____ (c.)
 (optional--use for major addns)

primary orig use: School

secondary orig use: _____

primary style: Mediterranean Revival

secondary style: _____

primary siding: Standard Brick

secondary siding: Concrete: Other/Undefined

plan type: School (General)

total # eligible resources: 5 total # ineligible resources: 1

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

orig use comments: _____

prim style comments: _____

sec style comments: _____

siding comments: _____

architect: Jones, George H.

builder: _____

comments/notes: _____

GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS

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

farmstead/cluster name: _____ external site #: 276
 (ID# used in city/agency database)

SHPO INFO FOR THIS PROPERTY

NR date listed: _____

ILS survey date: 6/26/2009

RLS survey date: 6/26/2009

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

Situated in the primarily single family residential neighborhood of Northeast Portland, the Rigler Elementary School at 5401 NE Prescott Street is located on a 9.2-acre campus that consists of a two-story school building (276A) and four detached portable/modular (276 P1,2,3,4) classrooms. Built in 1931, the Mediterranean Revival style building with minor Art Deco influences and a pantile roof is a reinforced concrete structure with brick veneer and cast stone ornamentation. The building's modified L-shaped plan includes classrooms, a library, an auditorium, a gymnasium, a cafeteria, and an administrative office.

Architectural Description

Situated in the primarily single family residential neighborhood of Northeast Portland, the Rigler Elementary School is located at 5401 NE Prescott Street. The Rigler Elementary School, which faces NE Prescott Street, is situated on a grass-covered and asphalt 9.2-acre campus with play fields, a play shed, and playgrounds north and west of the school. The school facilities consist of a two-story school building (276A) and four detached portable/modular (276 P1,2,3,4) classrooms. During the mid-1950s, a one story brick addition was constructed onto the rear (east wing) of the building. The school's parking area is located to the southwest of the main building.

The two-story school building with a ground floor basement is oriented on an east-west axis. The reinforced concrete building is covered with variegated brick. The rectangular mass of the building sits on a concrete foundation. Polygonal bays project from the front and side elevations. The building features Mediterranean Revival style detailing with Art Deco influences. Red pantiles cover the roof. The windows and doors feature cast stone surrounds. The recessed main entrance has an arched window above the door capped with voussoirs and keystones. An ornamented cast stone panel inscribed with the school's name is located above the door. The north (rear) elevation is highlighted by a brick-cladded stack that extends from the boiler room.

The windows consist primarily of symmetrically placed metal frame replacement windows with a horizontal sliding opening at the bottom of each window. Divided into three horizontal sections, the upper section of each window is blocked off with louvered vents. Single and double leaf metal doors replaced the original wooden fixed-pane entry doors.

The interior layout of the school consists of a modified L-shaped hallway plan on both floors. The double-loaded hallways feature marble splash guards behind the water fountains, wooden display cases, unpainted molding and framing, and built-in metal lockers. Most of the wood molding and framing is intact and in superb condition. The 2nd floor hallway in the original section of the building is in good condition although the molding is painted and lockers were added. Flooring consists of original linoleum. The original single leaf wood doors provide access to the classrooms from the hallways. The 1955 wing hallway has a narrow configuration, tiled and plaster veneer walls, and unpainted, wooden doors, framing and molding.

While some of the 1st/2nd story landing arched windows were replaced, the stairwells retain their original concrete steps and landings, plaster veneer walls, wooden railings and molding, and steam radiators.

The majority of classrooms retain their original configuration, height, wooden doors, linoleum tile floors, clean-up alcoves, and wooden built-ins and closets. The wood framing and molding has been painted. The 1955 wing classrooms have wooden built-ins and closets, and unpainted wood molding and framing.

The auditorium, located on the 1st floor, features many original details including the stage, boxed ceiling, and wall light fixtures. New ceiling fixtures have been introduced. The original seating is intact but the front rows were removed. The room is illuminated by original wood frame semi-circular/arched multi-light windows.

The gymnasium, located on the first floor, retains its original configuration and height including a high bay ceiling supported by steel trusses. The facility has brick walls, built-in lockers, and wood frame multi-light double hung sash windows.

The building is heated by steam boilers located in the ground floor basement facing north. Radiators with metal covers are found in the hallways, stairwells and in the classrooms. Grilles set in the wall provide heat and cool air for the basement rooms. Cool air is pushed through the building's vents by compressor-powered fans.

Constructed in the late 1940s, the 4 portables are located west of the main building. The buildings are wood frame with hip roofs and vertical panel cladding. Fenestration consists of three-pane wood frame hinged windows and single leaf wood doors. The classrooms have minimal built-in classroom furnishings and cabinetry.

Alterations/Integrity

The first major additions/modifications to the school occurred when the 1955 wing was added to the north side of the school. The first major additions/modifications to the interior occurred during the mid-1970s, in the northeast and northwest wings. In 1976, there was major interior remodeling of the auditorium, library, and of the classrooms and hallways. In 1987, metal frame windows replaced most of the original wood frame multi-light windows (Rigler Facility Plan, Profile).

The Rigler School maintains a moderate degree of integrity. The one-story, 1955 brick rear wing is located on the road and is compatible with the building's historic scale, design, features and materials. While most of the windows were replaced, the original arched/semi-circular windows are present in the auditorium, gymnasium, and several of the stairwell landings. The school's variegated brick cladding, red pantile roof, and cast stone

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details are 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 1931, Rigler School was named in honor of Frank Rigler, the superintendent of Portland Public Schools from 1896-1913 (Snyder 1979: 241). The school was constructed for \$232,538 during a period of progressive era growth that responded to changing city demographics and ideas concerning safety, sanitation, and child centered instruction (Portland Chronology Binder; Ripa, 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 current 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).

Rigler School was designed by one of the most influential architects hired by Portland Public Schools (PPS), George Jones. Along with Floyd Naramore, Jones designed a large majority of the schools 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 Rigler 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). 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).

Many of Portland's new fire proof buildings, such as Rigler, were constructed of brick and concrete. While Rigler deviated from the U-shaped plan that was characteristic of schools constructed during this period, the building plan is similar; a long lateral corridor is connected to other wings of the building by short hallways. Like other PPS buildings constructed during this period, Rigler contained more differentiated and increasingly specialized space (Powers and Corning 1937: 182).

Rigler Elementary School was constructed in the Mediterranean Revival style that was popular for educational buildings during the first half of the twentieth-century. 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).

In the late 1940s, four portable classrooms were added to the Rigler School campus to accommodate an increasing number of students. The first major additions/modifications to the school occurred when the 1955 wing was added to the north side of the school. In the 1970s and 1980s modest alterations occurred in various classrooms and offices. The most substantial alterations occurred in 1987 when the exterior windows were replaced (Rigler Facility Profile).

Rigler School retains its integrity with minimal alterations to its plan and exterior and interior finishes. The 1931 school is recommended as eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) for its association with progressive era public school construction in Portland (Criterion A). Rigler Elementary School is a good example of the two-story Georgian style school buildings that were constructed during the early-twentieth century. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of the style as applied by George Jones to school buildings in Portland; therefore, it is also eligible for listing in 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: 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.

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

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

_____. Rigler Elementary School. Facility Plan.

_____. Rigler Elementary School. 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).

Snyder, Eugene E. *Portland Names and Neighborhoods. Their Historic Origins*. Portland: Binforrd & Mort Publishing; 1st edition 1979.



South elevation front entry



South elevation front entry



South elevation front entries



South elevation front entry



East elevation addition



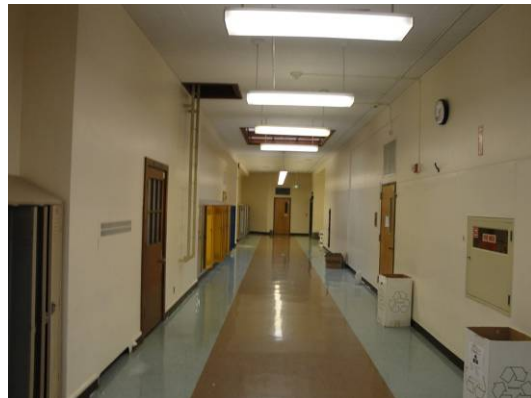
Corridor facing west



Stairwell entry hall



Auditorium facing north



Corridor facing south

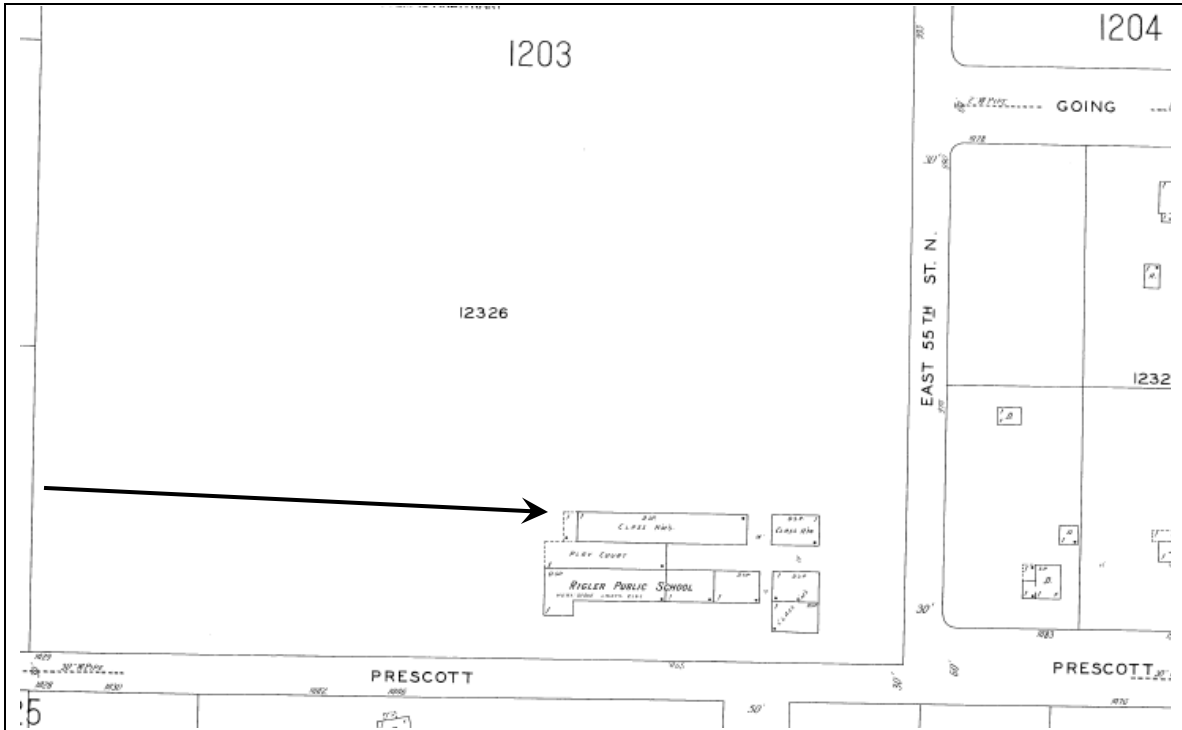


Gymnasium facing north



ENTRIX

Down to Earth. Down to Business.™

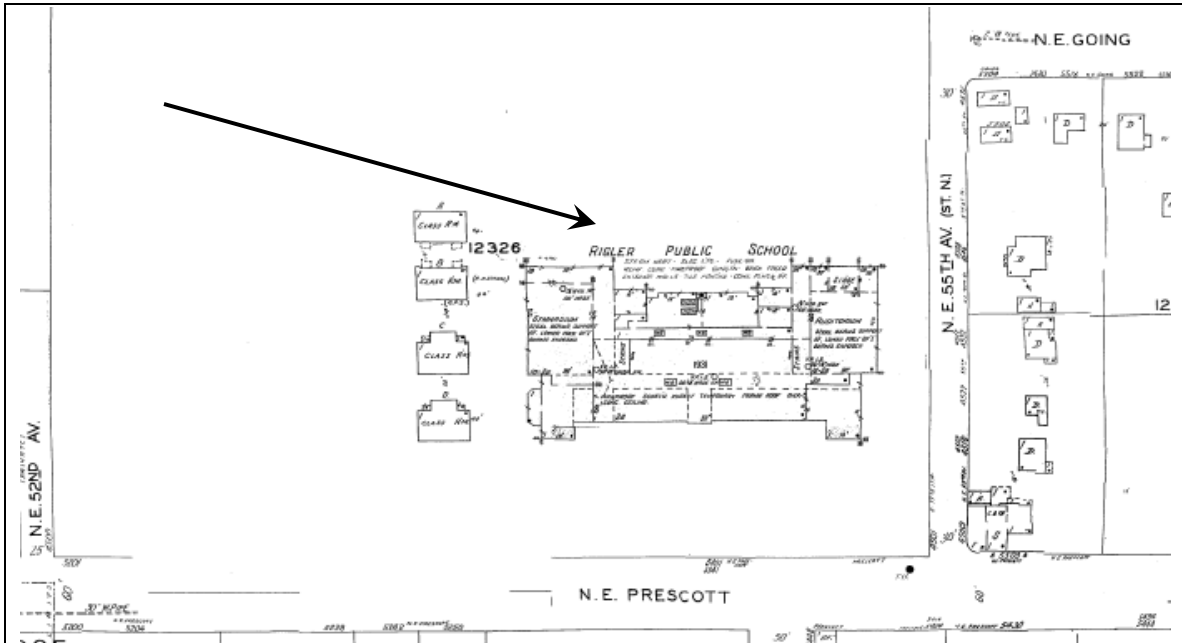


1924-1928, Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Portland, Oregon, Map 1226. Arrow points to the old Rigler Public School prior to the construction of the new building.



ENTRIX

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Updated to 1950 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Portland, Oregon, Map 1226.
Arrow points to Rigler Public School.



RIGLER ELEMENTARY - 276

5401 NE PRESCOTT ST 97218

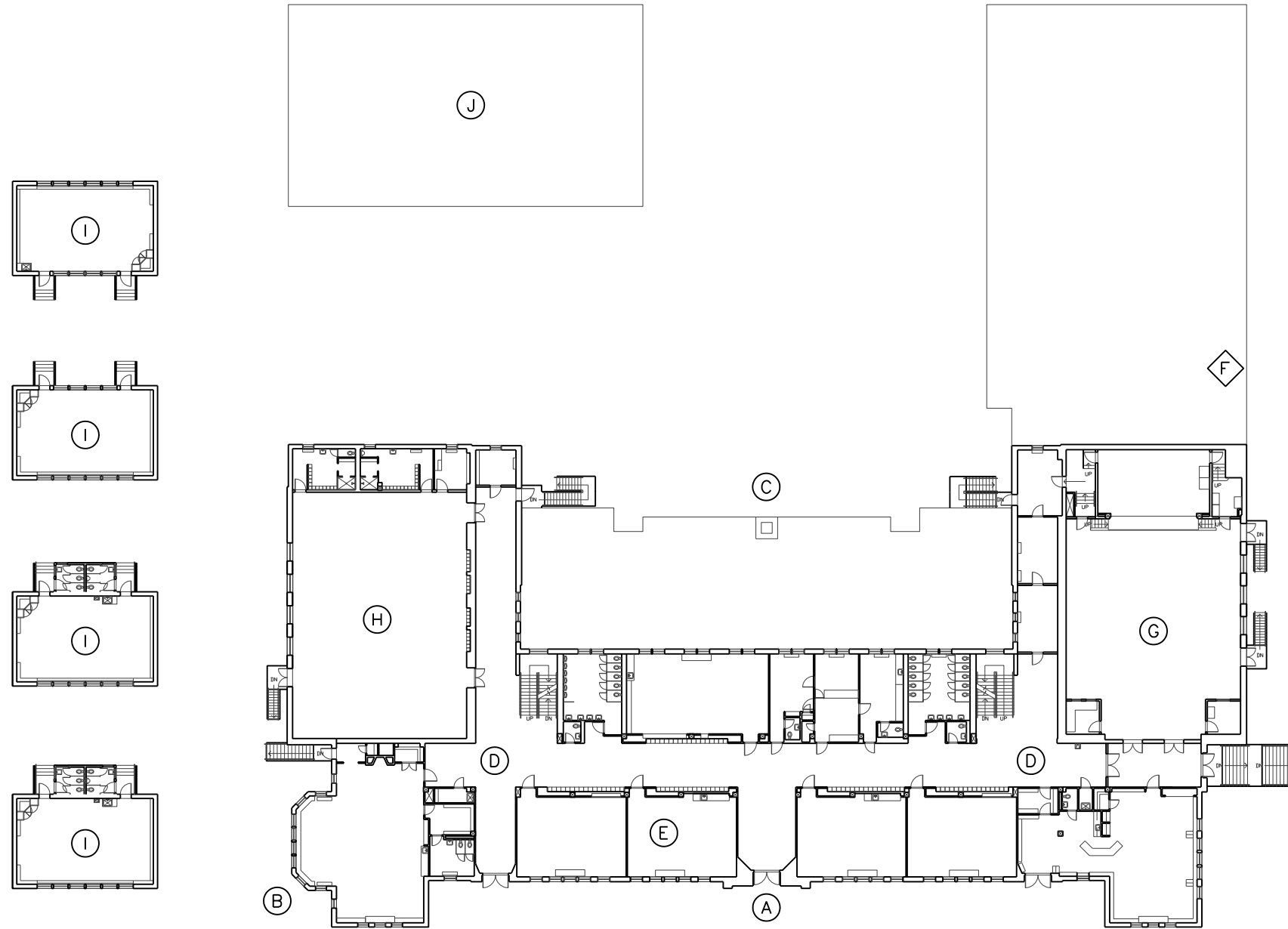
PPS HISTORIC ASSESSMENT

KEYNOTES:

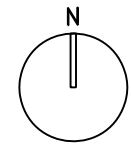
- (A) THE ENTRY TO THE SCHOOL IS BENEATH A SLIGHTLY PROJECTING GABLE ROOF ON THE SOUTH ELEVATION. THE MAIN ENTRANCE HAS AN ARCHED WINDOW ABOVE THE DOOR CAPPED WITH VOUSSOIRS AND KEYSTONES. AN ORNAMENTED CAST STONE PANEL INSCRIBED WITH THE SCHOOL'S NAME IS LOCATED ABOVE THE DOOR.
- (B) POLYGONAL BAY PROJECTS FROM THE WEST ELEVATIONS.
- (C) THE NORTH (REAR) ELEVATION IS HIGHLIGHTED BY A BRICK CHIMNEY THAT RISES FROM THE BOILER ROOM.
- (D) THE INTERIOR LAYOUT OF THE SCHOOL CONSISTS OF A MODIFIED "L" SHAPE HALLWAY PLAN ON BOTH FLOORS. THE DOUBLE-LOADED HALLWAYS FEATURE MARBLE SPLASH GUARDS BEHIND THE WATER FOUNTAINS, WOODEN DISPLAY CASES, UNPAINTED MOLDING AND FRAMING, AND BUILT-IN METAL LOCKERS.
- (E) THE 1ST FLOOR CLASSROOMS RETAIN THEIR ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION AND HEIGHT, WOODEN DOORS, LINOLEUM TILE FLOORS, CLEAN-UP ALCOVES, AND WOODEN BUILT-INS AND CLOSETS.
- (F) THE 1955 WING CLASSROOMS (BELOW) HAVE WOODEN BUILT-INS AND CLOSETS, AND UNPAINTED WOOD MOLDING AND FRAMING.
- (G) THE AUDITORIUM FEATURES MANY OF ITS ORIGINAL DETAILS INCLUDING THE STAGE, BOXED CEILING AND WALL LIGHT FIXTURES. THE ORIGINAL SEATING IS INTACT BUT THE FRONT ROWS WERE REMOVED. THE ROOM IS ILLUMINATED BY ORIGINAL WOOD FRAME, SEMI-CIRCULAR/ARCHED, MULTI-LIGHT WINDOWS.
- (H) THE GYMNASIUM, LOCATED ON THE FIRST FLOOR, RETAINS ITS ORIGINAL CONFIGURATION AND HEIGHT, INCLUDING A HIGH BAY CEILING SUPPORTED BY STEEL TRUSSES. THE FACILITY HAS BRICK WALLS, BUILT-IN LOCKERS, AND WOOD FRAME, MULTI-LIGHT, DOUBLE HUNG SASH WINDOWS.
- (I) PORTABLE CLASSROOMS
- (J) PLAYSHED

GENERAL NOTES:

- 1 BUILT IN 1931, THE MEDITERRANEAN REVIVAL BUILDING WITH MINOR ART DECO INFLUENCES AND A MISSION STYLE ROOF IS A REINFORCED CONCRETE STRUCTURE WITH BRICK VENEER AND CAST STONE ORNAMENTATION.
- 2 THE WINDOWS CONSIST PRIMARILY OF SYMMETRICALLY PLACED, METAL FRAME REPLACEMENT WINDOWS WITH A HORIZONTAL SLIDING OPENING AT THE BOTTOM OF EACH WINDOW.



1 RIGLER ELEMENTARY - 1ST FLOOR
SCALE: 1" = 40'-0"



DRAWING: ANNOTATED PLAN

DATE: Sept. 4, 2009

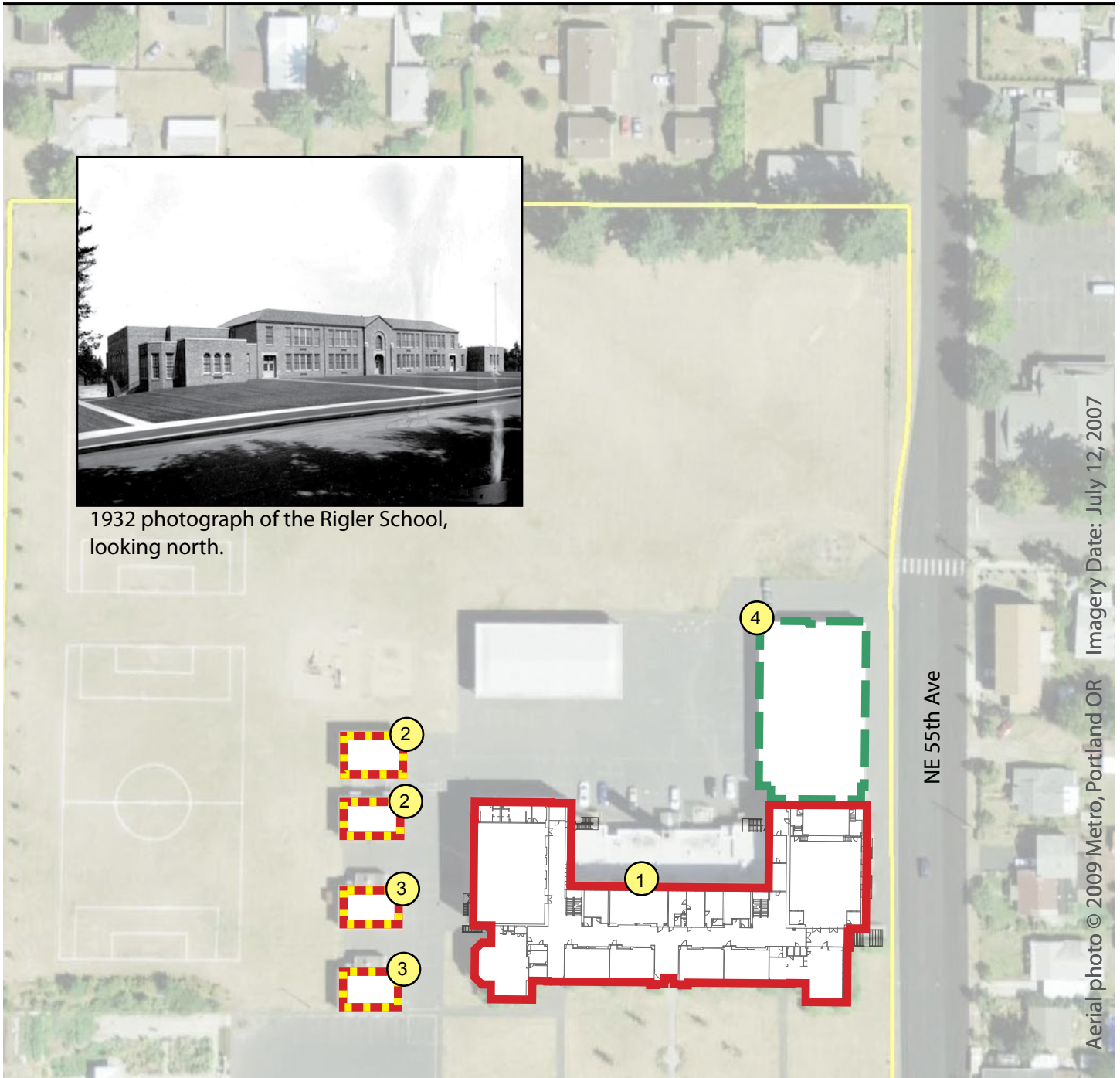
Rigler School

5401 NE Prescott St, Portland OR, 97218

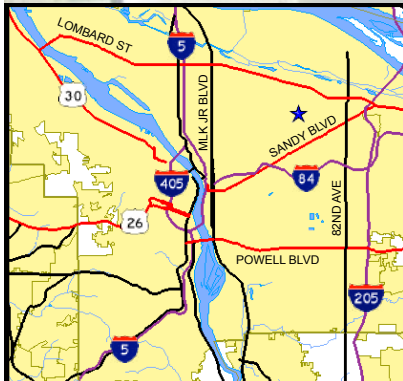
[View Site in Google Maps](#)



1932 photograph of the Rigler School, looking north.



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. Original Building (276A), 1931
2. Addition (276P3, P4), 1947
3. Addition (276P1, P2), 1948
4. Addition (276A), 1955