

Survey of Historic and Cultural Resources
City of Talent, Oregon
Original Town Plat Survey, 1995
[Jackson County 029]

Historic Name: **Talent Elementary School**
Location: **204 MAIN ST E**
City: **Talent, Oregon 97540**
Owner: **TALENT CITY OF**
MailAdd **P O BOX 445**

TALENT, OR **97540**
Addition: **Original Town of Talent**
Block: **L** Lot: **1-10** Taxlot: **4800**
T/R/S **381W23CD** Acct# **10276078**
Quadrangle: **Talent 7.5 minute**

Common: **Talent Community Center**
Date of Construction: **1899**
Original Use: **Educ:School**
Present Use: **Social:Civic**
Architect: **Unknown**
Builder: **Unknown**
Style: **Vernacular**
Resource Type: **Building**
Theme: **Government:Local_City**
Condition: **Good**

Plan: **Irregular**
Foundation: **Stone;**
Roof Form: **Gable;Multiple**
Wall Construction: **Wood**
Primary Window: **1/1 double hung sash window**

No. of Stories **1.0**
Basement: **Daylight**
Roof Material: **Asphalt;3-Tab**
Stuct. Frame: **Wood;Light Frame**

Exterior Surface: **Wood:Horizontal Dbl Drop**

Decorative Features: **transom lites; wide fascia boards; cornerboards; clipped gables; open belfrey; gable on hip roof axis**

Other:

Alterations/Additions: **Addition to SE corner c.1950s, original rear volume to rear [n.d.], front porch**

Landscape Features: **Deep setback from street with memorials etc., parking to rear.**

Associated Structures: **c.1960s conc blk bldg to west used as Talent City Hall., Fire Station and Public library to north on same Tax Lot.**

Faces south on entire half block in mixed residential\public use area.

Sources

Jackson Cty Deed Records, Assessors Fieldnotes (1912-), 1930 Sanborn Fire Insurance map, 1900 & 1910 Jackson Cty Census, 1910- Jackson Cty Directories and other sources as cited in the attached narrative.

Photo Roll: **BP5** Frame[s]: **20A**
Date Recorded: **03/28/95**

Ranking: **Primary**

Recorded By: **George Kramer, M.S., with Hugh Davidson**

Talent Survey Number: **209.0**
SHPO NO: **209.0**

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TALNO: 209.0

TALENT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

381W23CD-4800

204 MAIN ST

Built: 1899

Primary

One of the dominant visual landmarks in the Talent area, the wood framed Talent Elementary School building, commonly known as the Talent Community Center, has been an area focal point for almost 100 years. First used by School District 22, the building served as Talent's first City Hall following incorporation and, most recently, as a frequently used public and fraternal meeting facility.

Construction of the one-story schoolhouse began in the late 1899, following a reorganization of School District 22.

The reorganization of the Talent school district will result in the erection of three new school buildings, one in South Wagner Creek, one in Anderson Creek...and the other in Talent... *The Talent building, which will cost about \$1500, will be constructed as soon as the details can be arranged.* (Ashland Tidings, 13-July-1899, 3:3, emphasis added)

In September 1899 C. K. Klum, a local real estate investor and businessman, sold the subject lots [Lots 1-10, Block I] at the corner of I and Main streets to the District for \$200. (JCD 36:425) By December construction of a "fine new building" was to start shortly. (Ashland Tidings, 4-December-1899) The building was apparently completed on schedule and remained in use by the School District for the next 12-13 years. Then, following completion of the new brick Talent school building, located on the site of the present Talent Elementary, the future of the subject building was unclear.

What is to be done with the old school house just vacated for the new one? This is a question that comes to some of the citizens of the district. Many are in favor of turning the grounds and buildings over to the Town of Talent, to be used for public purposes, and the grounds to be parked and the buildings to be painted and put in good condition...(Ashland Tidings 26-February-1912, 6:3-4)

It apparently took some time to clarify the fate of the building and arrange the transfer from the School District to the newly incorporated town. In April 1914, almost two years after the idea had first been raised, the building was finally sold to the City.

At the special school election held Saturday afternoon to decide as to the sale of the old school property, it was decided almost unanimously to sell the property to the City for a Town Hall....It is the intention of the authorities to put the building in first class condition and the Community Club is considering the beautifying of the grounds. (Ashland Tidings, 16-April-1914, 3:3-4)

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Following its acquisition of the building, the City undertook some modest renovation to convert the old school to its new purpose.

Two rooms of the Town Hall have been redecorated. One will be used by the Commercial Club and the other by the Town Council. (*Ashland Tidings*, 8-February-1915, 3:4)

As the Town Hall, the subject building the primary focus of public activities in the Town of Talent for the next five decades. The space was used by the town government, rented to community groups such as the Grange, the Community Club, and others for meetings, dances, and various other functions. In 1933, during the height of the so-called "Jackson County Rebellion," the Talent Council voted to permit the Good Government Congress to rent the hall. (Talent Council Minutes, 7-February-1933 and 7-March-1933)

With the 1960s construction of the present City Hall building, located immediately west of the schoolhouse, on the same tax lot, the larger facility ended its role as the primary site of local governmental activity. Certain insensitive alteration, notably blocking off the windows and modifying the interior character of the building, again reduced the integrity of the subject structure. By the mid-1970s, as much of America geared up for the nation's bicentennial by recognizing and celebrating historic places, the Talent Community Center became the focus of a local restoration effort.

The old building has been in need of repairs for some time, according to Talent city employee George Gleim. Plans for its restoration will start with 'tearing off the old kitchen part' at the back of the community hall. It was condemned for more than a year because of bad flooring. (*Ashland Daily Tidings*, 24-March-1976)

Renovation work on the Community Center proceeded throughout the summer, including work on the front entry steps. Contractor for this project was the Progressive Remolding Company, of Medford, and was funded by \$6500 in private donations. The culmination of the effort was on July 4th. Plans called for the strengthening of the bell tower and the ringing of the building's bell, however, this does not appear to have taken place.¹ Additional work, including the welding of a crack in the bell, was funded by Talent Councilman Jim Walker in 1980. The bell was finally rung on December 9th, 1980.

Nearly everyone was glad to have the bell back in working order. But even so, the bell's recent debut wasn't what a person would call a great musical experience. In fact, as one listener described the burst of sound, it was more like the dull thong of a boat moving through the fog than the high soprano of singing angels or the rich tenor of bells in a cathedral....It was never what you'd call a fine bell [said longtime resident Mae Lowe], adding that the bell's voice hasn't changed much with time. (*Ashland Daily Tidings*, 17-December-1980, 1:6-8)

In the past few years, renewed appreciation of the Talent Elementary School has resulted in renewed interest in its restoration and the City Council has formed a committee to oversee

¹ See *Ashland Daily Tidings* 5-June-1976, 3:1-2 referring to the plan to ring the bell.

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the project. Interior renovation, the installation of new wheelchair access, and the re-opening of long-closed windows have all taken place, correcting various changes to the building's fabric and slowly returning the building to its original character. This process is continuing at this time.

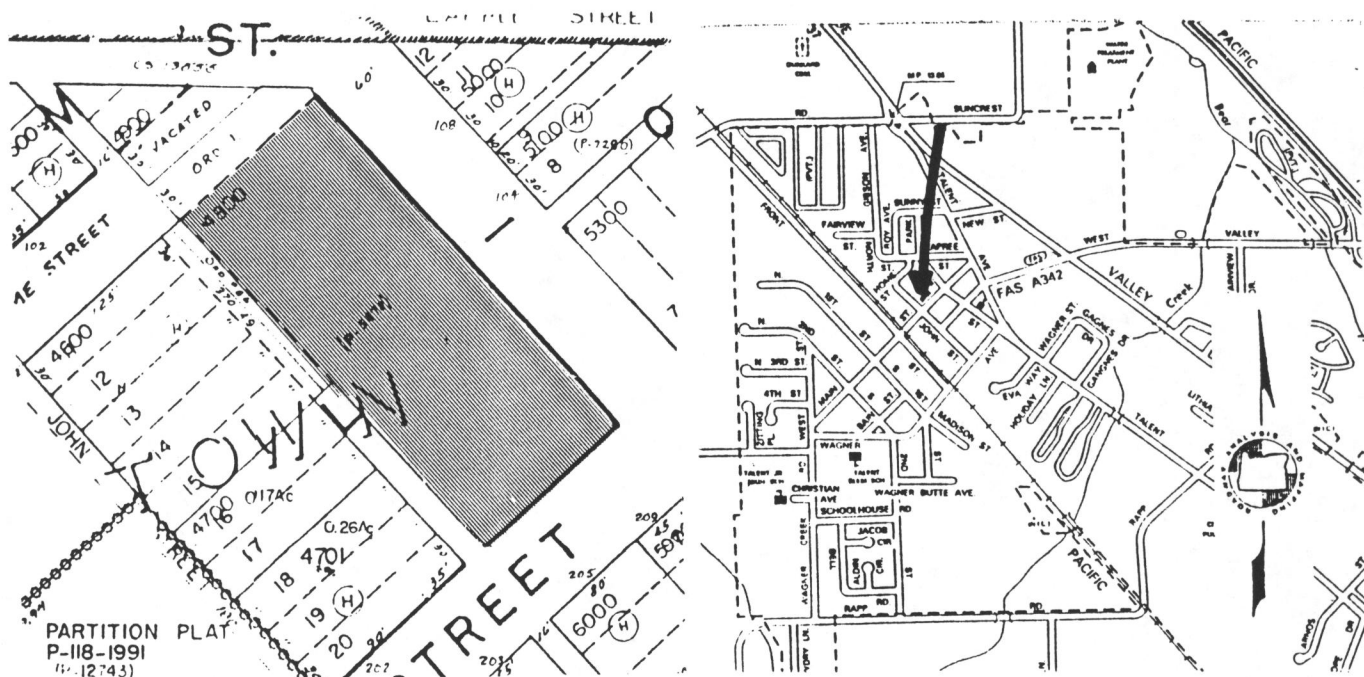
The Talent Elementary School building has been a focal point of the Talent community since its construction in 1899. In varying roles the building has served as a school, a City Hall, polling site, meeting place and a wide variety of other functions that typify life in a small agricultural-based town. Although somewhat modified by additions that compromise its facade and no longer set amidst its original "park-like" setting, the Talent Elementary School retains sufficient integrity to its original design in siding, window sash and trim, exterior detail, and other elements to effectively relate both its original construction and the prominent role that it has played in the history of Talent.

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Common: **Talent Community Center**
Date of Construction: **1899**



Photo Roll: BP5 Frame: 20A



GRAPHIC SOURCES: Annotated Jackson County Assessor's Plat, ODOT map of Talent, Photograph by Brian C. Prechtel, Talent [BP] or Hugh Davidson [HD]

Ranking: **Primary**

Talent Survey No. **209.0**
SHPO NO: **2357**