

Oregon Historic Site Record

LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME			
address:	204 Main St E Talent, Jackson County	historic name:	Talent Elementary School
assoc addresses:	206 East Main St	current/other names:	Talent City Hall
location descr:		block/lot/tax lot:	
		twshp/rng/sect/qtr sect:	36S 1W 3
PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS			
resource type:	Building	height (stories):	1.0
elig evaluation:	eligible/significant	total elig resources:	
prim constr date:	1899	NR Status:	Individually Listed
	second date:	date indiv listed:	03/07/2012
primary orig use:	School	orig use comments:	
second orig use:		prim style comments:	
primary style:	Vernacular	sec style comments:	
secondary style:		siding comments:	
primary siding:	Horizontal Board	architect:	
secondary siding:		builder:	
plan type:			
comments/notes:			
GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS			
Not associated with any surveys or groupings.			
SHPO INFORMATION FOR THIS PROPERTY			
NR date listed:	03/07/2012	106 Project(s):	None
ILS survey date:		Special Assess Project(s):	None
RLS survey date:		Federal Tax Project(s):	None
ARCHITECTURAL / PROPERTY DESCRIPTION			
<i>(Includes expanded description of the building/property, setting, significant landscape features, outbuildings and alterations)</i>			
<p>Completed in 1899, the Talent Elementary School is a large single story wood-frame structure with a gable-on-hip roof that rises from a stone and post-pier foundation. The property is located in the center of Talent, Oregon and has, for more than a century, served both literally and figuratively as the center of civic life in that community. Essentially a vernacular volume, the exterior of the building exhibits a modest Classical influence, typical of vernacular public-use structures built during the late 19th century. The Talent Elementary School retains its original double-drop exterior wood siding, double-hung 1/1 wood windows, and virtually all other original details on both the interior and exterior. After purchase by the City in 1914, the building was augmented by several additions to the rear and east, all constructed during the period of significance (1899-1971). The Talent Elementary School retains very high integrity to its original design and character, effectively conveying both its original appearance and the associations for which it is significant.</p>			
HISTORY			
<i>(Chronological, descriptive history of the property from its construction through at least the historic period - preferably to the present)</i>			
<p>Built in 1899, the Talent Elementary School is located in the center of Talent, Oregon and for more than a century and served literally and figuratively as the center of civic life in that community. First used as a school and then, acquired by the city in 1914, this one-story building has housed virtually every aspect of local government, serving as Talent's city hall, city offices, post office, and the library in addition to hosting a wide variety of non-profit community groups, public lectures, dances, public movies, and other events. The Period of Significance under Criterion A, Education, begins in 1899 with the building's construction and ends in 1911 when the building ceased to serve as a school. The building's association with Government and Politics and Social History begins in 1914, with the city's acquisition, and continues through 1971 when Talent built a new city hall and moved its administrative functions out of the building for the first time since 1914. The Talent Elementary School is locally significant under Criterion A, for its strong and continuing association with the development of Talent, Oregon and its role in that city's local government. The building is also significant under Criterion C, as a rare and almost entirely intact example of 19th century wood-frame vernacular architecture as used for public purposes in the southern Oregon region. The period of significance under Criterion C is 1899, the date of construction. Built in 1899 as the third building occupied by the Talent Elementary School, by 1912 this large one-story wood frame building located in the center of Talent, Oregon was in use as that city's first city hall. Purchased from the school district in 1914, under various names the Talent Elementary School, including the Talent City Hall and the Talent Community Center, has housed the full range of public and social organizations that have collectively played a pivotal role in the history and development of the community. The Talent Elementary School has been formally known as the "Talent Community Center" since 1965. The property is eligible for listing under Criterion A and C, in the following areas of significance. Education: Constructed in 1899, the third Talent Elementary School was constructed by School District #22 to accommodate a growing school-age population. In July 1899 the citizens of Talent unanimously approved funds to construct a new school in a special election. The new building was completed on schedule and classes were first held in the building in early December 1899. By 1910, after just eleven years of school use, the community of Talent was still growing and pressure again mounted for the construction of a newer and more modern school facility. Construction on the fourth Talent Elementary School, built of brick, began in May 1911 and was completed by late that year. Although the district may have held classes in both structures for a time during late-1911, the older wood-frame building was soon vacated. Politics/Government: Occupied by city offices in 1912 and purchased by the City of Talent in 1914, four years after its incorporation, the Talent Elementary School was Talent's first permanent city hall and until 1971 housed virtually all elements of local government, including administrative offices, city council chambers, police, public works, and the building and planning departments. Indeed, with the exception of the local fire department (located in a now removed structure elsewhere on the same tax lot) the nominated property contained all local government functions in Talent, Oregon for nearly seven decades. Social History: The Talent Elementary School building is strongly associated with a variety of community and social functions in Talent, Oregon, including the "Ladies Improvement League (later the Talent Community Club), which advocated for the city's original purchase of the property in 1914 and worked to maintain and improve the building and its grounds for local use. Between 1920 and 1964 the Talent Elementary School housed the Talent Library, partially funded and staffed by the members of the Community Club. Numerous other local groups and functions, including boy and girl scouts, the VFW, Lions Club, Talent Garden Club, Red Cross and others have all relied upon the Talent Elementary School for regular meeting space. Architecture: The Talent Elementary School is a large and substantially "as-built" example of late-19th century wood-frame vernacular architecture, exhibiting elements associated with the Classical Revival style that was popular during the later part of the 19th century. One of, if not the, oldest example of wood-frame vernacular public-use structures in southern Oregon, the building exemplifies the design and character of typical construction as used for schools, churches, and other public buildings.</p>			
RESEARCH INFORMATION			
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:	University Library:
Historical Society:	Other Respository:

Bibliography:

Ashland Tidings, as cited in text, by date. Ashland Daily Tidings, as cited in text, by date. Burnett, Alice. Usage of the Community Center, Talent, Oregon. Unpublished manuscript, Talent Historical Society Vertical Files, 2-September-2009. Clay, Scott and Kay Atwood. Jackson County Cultural and Historical Resource Survey. Medford, OR: Jackson County Planning Department, 1992. Cook, Robin. If These Walls Could Talk; A One Hundred Year History of the Talent Community Center. Unpublished Manuscript, prepared for Dr. Karen Gernant, SOU History Department, 11-March-1999. Gottfried, Herbert & Jan Jennings. American Vernacular Design: 1870-1940. Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1988. Helbock, Richard. "Nineteenth Century Jackson County Post Offices." The Postal Historian, April-October, 1968. JCD (Jackson County Deed Records), as cited in text by Volume:Page Kramer, George. Talent, Oregon: Historic Context Statement. Prepared for the City of Talent, Oregon, June 1994. Mail Tribune [Medford], as cited in text, by date. Nesheim, Margaret. One Hundred Twenty-Three Year's Search for Community: The Unwearied Effort for Public Education in Jackson County, Oregon, 1854-1976. Medford, OR: Gandee Printing Center, 1977. Reynolds, Yvonne. Talent: Worth its Weight in Gold. Talent, OR: Lolot Press, 1996. Oregonian [Portland], as cited in text, by date. Sommer, Hilda. Early History of the Talent Library. Talent, OR: Friends of the Talent Library (<http://www.homepage.mac.com/fotl/hulda.html>). Wright, Jan. Talent-Images of America Series. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2009. Harris, Cyril. A Dictionary of Architecture and Construction. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1975.