

Oregon Historic Site Record

LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME			
address:	2245 NE 36th Ave Portland, Multnomah County	historic name:	Grant, Ulysses S, High School
assoc addresses:		current/other names:	Grant High School
location descr:		block/lot/tax lot:	
		twshp/rng/sect/qtr sect:	1N 1E 25
PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS			
resource type:	Building	height (stories):	2.0
elig evaluation:	eligible/significant	total elig resources:	2
prim constr date:	1923	second date:	1952
		total inelig resources:	5
primary orig use:	School	NR Status:	
second orig use:		date indiv listed:	
primary style:	Classical Revival: other	orig use comments:	
secondary style:		prim style comments:	
primary siding:	Standard Brick	sec style comments:	
secondary siding:	Concrete: Other/Undefined	siding comments:	
plan type:	School (General)	architect:	Knighton & Howell
		builder:	
comments/notes:			
HRI Rank II.			
GROUPINGS / ASSOCIATIONS			
Survey/Grouping Included In:	Type of Grouping	Date Listed	Date Compiled
Portland Public Schools Historic Building Assessment	Survey & Inventory Project		2009
SHPO INFORMATION FOR THIS PROPERTY			
NR date listed:	N/A	106 Project(s):	None
ILS survey date:	06/25/2009	Special Assess Project(s):	None
RLS survey date:	06/25/2009	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>Description Summary Grant High School is located at 2245 NE 36th Ave. in the Grant Park neighborhood of northeast Portland. The ten acre campus includes an extensive collection of educational buildings constructed between 1923 and 1970 including the main original building (1923, 217A), old gym (1923, 217B), north wing (1925, 217C), south wing (1927, 217D), auditorium (1927, 217E), 1952 addition to north wing (1956, part of 217C), new gymnasium (1956, 217F), library wing (1959, 217G), three portable classrooms (1962, 217P1/P2/P3), science building (1966, 217H), auto shop building (1970, 217J). Set within a flat, pastoral setting of trees and parkland, the buildings constructed in the 1920s at Grant High School form a core group of Classical Revival style buildings. The buildings exhibit a variety of character defining features including a bilaterally symmetrical U-shaped plan, a bold portico supported by fluted Ionic columns with a broad terra cotta frieze, ancillary entries with terra cotta Ionic columns or pilasters and classical entablatures, a concrete watertable, terra cotta stringcourse, terra cotta cornice and coping, an interior entry with boxed beam ceilings, as well as the original gymnasium with its flush Ionic column lined entry. Architectural Description Grant High School is situated in the Grant Park neighborhood of northeast Portland. The campus occupies a ten acre campus that adjoins Grant Park which includes a number of playing fields as well as the Grant Park pool. The campus is located in the southeast corner of the park but is well integrated with the park's pastoral and wooded setting. Development in the surrounding area consists primarily of single family residences built between 1910 and 1950 (Sanborn Maps, 1924-1928, 1908-1950 updated). Broad open and tree shaded fields are situated to the south, east, and north ends of the high school with the principal entry located on the NE 36th Ave. side of the main school building. Due to the clustering of the buildings, there are no large open courtyards between buildings. Playing fields, track, football field, tennis courts, and the pool lie to the west of the buildings, while a surface parking lot is situated to the north. Approached from the east side, the main school building is an extensible two story concrete structure with a full basement. The exterior walls are covered with a brick veneer that is laid in an all stretcher bond. The Classical Revival style of the high school is most boldly expressed on the main entrance, ancillary entrances, as well as the east faces of the north and south wings. The classical detailing found throughout the building includes terra cotta columns, door and window surrounds, balustrades, dentil cornices, consoles, cartouches, and beltcourses. The most decorative emphasis is placed on the main entrance and ancillary entries. The main (east) entrance into the school consists of three double doorways that are sheltered by a shallow portico that lacks a pediment. The portico is lined by four free-standing fluted Ionic columns that are flanked by brick walls. Bas relief panels that consist of an open book flank the school's name – "Ulysses S. Grant High School" – that appears in a plain frieze above the columns. Each of the doorways feature a terra cotta surround as well as a dentil cornice and pediment that consists of a central cartouche as well as acanthus leaf fans. Ancillary entrances located around the main building and north and south wings feature a variety of different terra cotta embellishments. Some entrances feature relatively plain surrounds topped with a console supported balustrade or a double door entry with flanking pilasters, dentil cornice, entablature, and balustrade. The stairwell windows above these entrances have generally retained their wood windows. Similar in scale and treatment as the main entrance, the gymnasium main entrance features four free standing fluted Ionic columns that support a plain terra cotta frieze that exhibits flanking bas relief urns and coping. The interior of the main building consists of an U-shaped corridor plan that consists of the main building and north and south wings. The most significant interior spaces include the main entrance, auditorium, and old gymnasium. The main entrance features paneled pilasters with Egyptian-revival style capitals with acanthus leaves, dentil cornice and boxed beam ceiling. The auditorium features a stage with a guilloche surround as well as its original seating and balcony. Two WPA-era murals that depict the "Ideals of Education" by Carl Hoeckner appear on both sides of the stage. The gymnasium exhibits its original exposed brick walls, cantilevered balcony and exposed roof truss. The corridors have 12" by 12" tiles and are typically lined by lockers. The classrooms within the main building are generally square, retain their built-in wood cabinetry, and exhibit tubular fluorescent lighting. Alterations/Integrity All of post 1927 buildings at Grant High School were constructed in the rear part of the campus and do not impact the most prominent entrances into the original Classical Revival buildings. These additions include a 1952 classroom addition adjoined to the rear of the north wing, a detached double-height gymnasium located just south of the old gymnasium (1956), a one story library wing (1959) attached to the main building, three one story portable classrooms (1962), a one story science building (1966), and a one story auto shop (1970). Other alterations include the replacement of nearly all windows in the late 1980s. Despite these modifications, the school retains important character-defining features such as the Classical Revival terra cotta detailing and the interior embellishments in the main public spaces. It therefore retains the historical integrity of its materials, design, setting, location, workmanship, feeling, and association.</p>			
HISTORY			
<i>(Chronological, descriptive history of the property from its construction through at least the historic period - preferably to the present)</i>			

Significance Summary In 1869, the first high school, housed in two rooms of the former North School building in Portland, was opened (Powers and Corning 1937: 74). Despite early struggles in the development of a consistent curriculum, the high school persisted at the will of the city's residents until the Oregon School Code, adopted in 1878, officially authorized the construction of high schools in the city (Sevetson 2007: 465). The first purpose built high school in Portland was the 1883 Portland High School built on Southwest Fourteenth and Morrison. Before it was even built, the school was the subject of a serious debate among prominent citizens, including George Atkinson and Harvey Scott as to the necessity of a publicly funded high school. Despite the conflict, the 1883 "Transition Gothic" styled Portland High School established a high design standard for the city's high schools as it was prominently featured in William Thayer's "Marvels of the New West" in 1887 (Thayer 1887: 334). Future high schools in the city would be built on a similarly grand scale. Beginning with the construction of the main building and a gymnasium in 1923 and closely followed by an additional auditorium unit and two wings between 1925 and 1927 Grant High School was part of a dramatic building program begun by the Portland Public Schools in the early 1900s. Gradually influenced by John Dewey's Progressive Education Movement, Portland Public Schools 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 current classroom capacity and existing schools could not effectively serve areas of the city with new residential development (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, the first joint meeting between Portland city officials, Multnomah County Commissioners, and the school board resulted in officials agreeing to work with building code officials to implement adequate fire safety measures in all existing and future schools in a more cost effective manner (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 from 1908 to 1932. Due to the large number of projects conducted by the district in the early 1920s, however, the school board hired Knighton & Howell, a Portland architectural firm to create the designs for Grant High School. The partnership of Knighton & Howell was formed in 1924 and continued for 14 years until William Knighton's death in 1938. Born in Indianapolis, Indiana in 1864, William Christmas Knighton received his schooling and architecture training in Chicago. After returning to Portland for the second time in 1902 he spent the next decade working in a variety of different partnerships. In 1913 Knighton was appointed the first state architect. While in this position he was responsible for numerous prominent buildings, including the State Supreme Court Building and the Administrative Building at the University of Oregon. From 1919 to 1923 he served as the first president of the Oregon State Board of Architect Examiners. Born in Kansas in 1884, Leslie Dillon Howell relocated to Portland in 1910 where he practiced architecture for the next 35 years. Howell served in both World War I and World War II. Following Knighton's death, Howell practiced alone for several years (Ritz 2003: 230-231 and 196-197). Not unlike Franklin High School, the overall placement and design of Grant High School was greatly influenced by its proximity to a city park. While city planners and the school district had worked together since the early twentieth century to coordinate the construction of schools near open spaces, Grant High School was indicative of the maturity of that coordination and the combined influences of the City Beautiful Movement and the Progressive education movement. Matthew O'Dell further elaborated in 1923 that "possibly the greatest advancement made during the past year was the successful co-operation of the School District and the Department of Parks and Playgrounds of the city in the development of the Grant High School and its site as a portion of a community park and playground" (Powers and Corning 1937: 233). The site, a 13.34 acre tract owned by B.E. Wright, was acquired by PPS in 1923 for \$40,200. The main building at Grant would cost \$315,473 to construct. Even before construction began, however, difficulties emerged concerning the supply of bricks for the school. The Washington State-based Denny-Renton Clay and Coal company could not supply the needed bricks for the school and the school board was left to contract with another company in Montana to supply the bricks (Oregonian 6-23-1923). Having resolved the issue concerning the bricks, the district soon angered union bricklayers hired to construct Grant, as well as Gregory Heights (now Roseway Heights), Chapman, and Laurelhurst Schools. Seeking to cut costs, the district used a maintenance worker to lay bricks for a portion of the Chapman School (Oregonian 11-4-1923). Unable to come to agreement with the bricklayers, the bricklayers went out on strike for several weeks delaying work on the schools (Oregonian 11-22-1923). When it was completed, Ulysses S. Grant High School was typical of the high schools constructed by PPS in the pre-World War II era. Originally designed to be added on to over time, the main building at Grant High School would receive a north wing in 1925 and an auditorium and south wing in 1927. In addition to being an extensible school, the school was also reflective of fire-proof construction through its use of a reinforced concrete structure with brick facing. The buildings at Grant High 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 Grant High School architectural plans, for instance, showed that the school would have a chemistry laboratory, lecture rooms, physics laboratory, biology laboratory, study hall, cooking room, manual training, domestic arts, bookkeeping room, typewriting room, school store, and free-hand drawing room. Designed in the Classical Revival style, Grant High School fell within stylistic trends of the period as most schools in Portland were designed in 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). The growing population of northeast Portland would prompt the construction of several brick additions to the Grant High School campus. This included a classroom addition to the north wing in 1952, new gymnasium in 1956, library wing in 1959, three portables in 1962, a science building in 1966, and an auto shop in 1970. All of these buildings were constructed in the center of the campus so as not to disturb the park-like setting on the east side of the school grounds. Grant High School is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its association with the continued expansion of higher education in Portland during the early 1920s and the increased coordination between PPS and the city's Parks and Recreation Department in the planning of school facilities. Grant High School is also an excellent example of the Classical Revival style and retains much of its integrity. The original main building, original gymnasium, two wings, and auditorium exhibit the architectural detailing, massing, and symmetry typical of the Classical Revival style. The High School also reflects the architectural competence of architects Knighton and Howell. Grant High School is therefore eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C. While several additions have been introduced into the campus in 1950s, 1960s, and 1970 they do not preclude the eligibility of the school as they do not detract from the school's principal elevation and its associated park-like setting.

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:	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. "Brick Contract Fails." 6-23-1923. Oregonian. "Director Attacks School Architect." 11-22-1923. 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. School Chronology Binder. _____. Architectural Drawing Archive. _____. Grant School Facility Plan. _____. Grant 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. 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. Sevetson, Donald J. "George Atkinson, Harvey Scott, and the Portland High School Controversy of 1880." Oregon Historical Quarterly. 108: 3 (Fall 2007). Sibley, Ernest. "Why I Prefer the Colonial Style." School Board Journal: Vol. 66 (January 1923). Thayer, William. Marvels of the New West. Norwich, CT: The Henry Hill Publishing Company, 1887.