# Oregon Historic Site Record

## LOCATION AND PROPERTY NAME

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **address:** | 5405 SE Woodward St | **historic name:** | Benjamin Franklin High School |
| | Portland, Multnomah County | **current/other names:** | Franklin High School |
| **assoc addresses:** | | **block/lot/tax lot:** | |
| **location descr:** | | **twnshp/rng/sect/qtr sect:** | 1S 2E 7 |

## PROPERTY CHARACTERISTICS

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **resource type:** | Building | **height (stories):** | 2.0 | **total elig resources:** | 2 | **total inelig resources:** | 1 |
| **elig evaluation:** | eligible/contributing | | | **NR Status:** | | | |
| **prim constr date:** | 1915 | **second date:** | 1950 | **date indiv listed:** | | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **primary orig use:** | School | **orig use comments:** | |
| **second orig use:** | | | |
| **primary style:** | Colonial Revival | **prim style comments:** | |
| **secondary style:** | | **sec style comments:** | |
| **primary siding:** | Brick:Other/Undefined | **siding comments:** | |
| **secondary siding:** | Cast Stone | | |
| **plan type:** | School (General) | **architect:** | Naramore, Floyd A |
| | | **builder:** | |

**comments/notes:**

HRI Rank II. 12-29-2015 - Franklin High School also has an association with the WPA through its statue of Benjamin Franklin, which was executed by George Berry and Thomas Laman under the aupices of the Oregon Art WPA. DJP

## 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:** | 06/26/2009 | **Special Assess Project(s):** | None |
| **RLS survey date:** | 06/26/2009 | **Federal Tax Project(s):** | None |

## ARCHITECTURAL / PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

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

Description Summary Franklin High School is located 5405 SE Woodward St. in the South Tabor neighborhood of southeast Portland. The 18 acre campus includes the original (1915, 215A) classroom and school office building, boiler building (1915, part of 215D), a manual arts (west) wing (1916, 215B), an auditorium (1924, 215C), a classroom addition (1950, 215D), a gymnasium (1954, 215E), an industrial arts building (1981, 215F), and a fieldhouse (1950, unnumbered). The Colonial Revival style school complex features a distinctive three part plan consisting of the main building, gymnasium wing, and auditorium wing. This core group of two story brick-faced and concrete buildings feature a balanced and largely symmetrical fenestration, colonial revival embellished porticos and entryways, staggered quoins on building corners, modillion cornices, jack arches with keystones over all windows, elaborate terra cotta panels, the retention of original twelve-over-twelve sash windows, and a centrally-placed, highly detailed clock tower with glazed cupola. Architectural Description Franklin High School is situated in the South Tabor neighborhood of southeast Portland. The campus occupies an expansive 18 acre rectangular-shaped parcel that is positioned between SE Woodward St. to the south and Division St. to the north. Development in the surrounding area consists primarily of single family residences built between 1900-1950 (Sanborn Maps 1924-1928, 1908-1950 updated). Some multi-family housing and institutional buildings are situated in close proximity to the school, but they are not predominant. The property also includes expansive playing fields that include a football field and baseball field. Just to the east of the school are playing fields and tennis courts that are part of Clinton Park and Atkinson School. They are situated to the northeast of the high school property. The grounds immediately in front (north) of the school are divided into two equal quadrants, while the rear (south) area features an oval shaped road and paths that lead to the rear entrance. Approached from the south, the main school building is a concrete structure with a brick veneer laid in an all stretcher bond. The main school building, auditorium, and west wing retain character defining features of the Colonial Revival style. The exteriors of these three buildings exhibit a beveled watertable, staggered terra cotta quoins, jack arch with keystone above each window, and modillion cornice, as well as hipped roofs. Decorative emphasis is most prominent on the front and rear entrances. The ceremonial or north entrance features a two story portico with both rounded and square shaped columns with acanthus leaf capitals. The columns support a pediment with a festoon-adorned tympanum as well as a modillion cornice. The three double-door entrances each feature elaborate transoms with leaded traceries as well as terra cotta surrounds. These surrounds are composed of Doric friezes decorated with triglyphs and metopes filled with panels decorated with cartouches, festoons, fruit bowls, swags, and sheaf of wheat with scythes. Immediately above the frieze is a soffit replete with mutules and lozenges. The more commonly used rear entrance slightly projects from the main building. Rather than columns, this entrance exhibits three portals decorated with terra cotta surrounds. Immediately above each door are terra cotta panels decorated with cartouches and festoons. Three large single hung fanlight windows illuminate an interior stair. The entrance composition is completed by a closed bed pediment that lies above the second floor and a modillion cornice. The most prominent feature of the main building is the clock tower which is symmetrically positioned in the middle of the building. Mirroring much of the embellishments below, this all-white structure features staggered quoins, dentil cornice, clocks framed by an open bed pediment and corner urns, as well as an eight sided, glazed belfry. The top of the tower exhibits urns as well as a bellcast roof and weathervane. Ancillary entrances exhibit Federal era-inspired door surrounds consisting of sidelights, slender pilasters with acanthus leaf capitals as well as a dentil cornice, and semi-elliptical leaded fanlights. Some of the secondary entrances also feature pediments as well. Nearly all of the windows on the first three units have been retained and exhibit their original twelve-over-twelve sash windows. The interior of the main building consists of a U-shaped corridor plan that is then attached on opposite ends to east and west wings by two story hyphens. In the main foyer are plain pilasters at each corner, boxed ceiling beams, as well as a set of staircases that lead to the second floor. At the head of the stairs on the second floor is a painting by WPA-era artist John Balletor entitled “Benjamin Franklin at Liberty Hall, Philadelphia” which was completed in 1935. The corridors have 12” by 12” linoleum tiles and are typically lined with lockers. The classrooms within the main building are rectangular and retain built-in wooden cabinetry, and also exhibit tubular fluorescent lighting. Classroom ceilings have acoustic tiles. The wings feature a rectangular massing with Colonial Revival detailing. The east wing serves as the auditorium which features a balcony and main seating area, as well as stage framed by plain pilasters with acanthus leaf capitals. The west wing is currently used for classroom space but was originally called the manual training wing and then later used as a gymnasium. A one story brick veneer building lies to the southwest of the older campus. This classroom building (1950, 215D) features an H-shaped massing with a gable roof as well as banks of horizontal plate glass windows and protruding, undifferentiated quoins. This building is also attached to the original Colonial Revival boiler building (1915, 215D). A gymnasium (215E, 1954) is located at the southeastern corner of the campus. This double height building is sensitively designed and features protruding squares of bricks that suggest corner quoins and/or mid-wall columns. A brick face concrete industrial arts building (215F, 1981) is located at the southwest corner of the property. It has a flat roof and a cantilevered walkway that shelters a series of garage doors for a bottom floor auto shop. To the north of the main campus of buildings is a brick faced fieldhouse (1950) that provides storage and restrooms for the adjoining athletic facilities. These facilities include a track, football field, and a number of other playing fields for soccer and baseball. The fieldhouse is also sensitively designed as it is constructed of concrete with a brick veneer, corner quoins, hip roof, and cupola. Alterations/Integrity A low to moderate level of alterations to the

campus and school buildings have occurred since the construction of the first Colonial Revival units between 1915 and 1924. In 1950, the one story classroom addition was constructed to the south of the main campus. In 1954, a new gymnasium was added to the southeast of the original buildings. No longer needed, the gymnasium of the west wing (215B) was subdivided into two floors for new classrooms in 1955. An auto shop and an industrial arts building were added to the complex in 1981. Despite these alterations, Franklin High School still retains its integrity of location, materials, design, association, feeling, and workmanship.

## HISTORY

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

Significance Statement Beginning with the construction of the main building in 1915 and closely followed by an additional two units constructed between 1916 and 1924, Franklin High 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, 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. 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). The architect of Franklin High 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 (Steinbrueck; 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 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). Intended to be expanded over time, the Franklin High School was designed in a distinctive Colonial Revival style and the campus was organized according to a multi—part plan that was intended to express the rationalities of the Colonial Revival style through its balanced and symmetrical placement of buildings. The additional buildings erected between 1915 and 1924 arose within the footprints originally intended by Naramore. Prior to the construction of the high school, PPS Superintendent Alderman and the Board agreed that a high school was needed in the outer portions of southeast Portland (Oregonian 2-6-1914). Students were initially housed at the Creston before the building was erected and ready for occupancy (PPS Chronology Binder). The original building (215A) was constructed in 1915 for $156,105 and was closely followed by the gymnasium in 1916 for $104,957. The third unit, the auditorium was added in 1934 for $233,759 (PPS School Chronology Binder). Designed by Floyd A. Naramore, a prominent Portland architect, Franklin High School represents an excellent example of the Colonial Revival style that retains much of its integrity. The school represents the work of a master as it reflects the architectural detailing, massing, and symmetry of the Colonial Revival style, and is therefore eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C. The high school is also eligible under Criterion A for its association with the rise of higher education in the 1910s under Superintendent Alderman, and for its association with the development of southeast Portland. While several additions have been introduced into the campus, they do not preclude the eligibility of the school.

## 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 Respository:** | 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. 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. The Dill Pickle Club, "Art for the Millions, The Enduirng Legacy of the WPA," Portland, OR, Eberhardt Press, 2010. Oregonian. "Board Authorizes New High School." 2-6-1914. 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. School Chronology Binder. _____. Franklin School Facility Plan. _____. Franklin 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). 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. Thayer, William. Marvels of the New West. Norwich, CT: The Henry Hill Publishing Company, 1887.