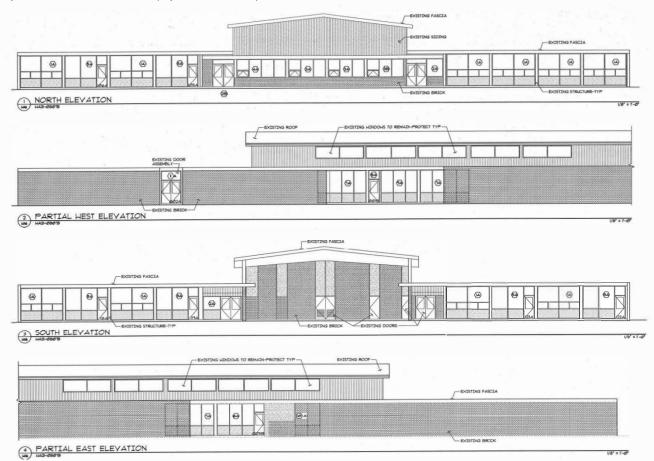
State-level Documentation for Lot Whitcomb Elementary, Milwaukie, OR



2018 photo of front of school (Opsis Architects)



Exterior Elevation drawings, 2009, by Architects Barrantine Bates Lee AIA

Lot Whitcomb Elementary, Milwaukie, Oregon State Level Documentation Mitigation for Adverse Effects

I. Architectural Description:

Lot Whitcomb Elementary School, at 7400 SE Thompson Road, Milwaukie Oregon 97222, is located in the unincorporated Southgate neighborhood in Clackamas County, west of Milwaukie and southeast of Portland. The school fronts north towards SE Thompson Road, and is bounded at the south by a row of eleven residential lots facing SE Harmony Drive. A large empty lot and adjacent residential lot serve as the western boundary to school property. A cluster of six residential lots, the Thompson Road Bible Fellowship building, and another row of residential lots running north-to-south serve as the school's eastern boundary. This row of residential properties fronts SE 77th Avenue to the east. The parcel that contains the school is approximately 11.07 acres. This includes the school's parking lot, playground, and two sport fields. The building itself is a total of 60,320 SF.

Constructed in 1958, Whitcomb Elementary was designed by Freeman, Hayslip, Tuft, & Hewlett in the International (fifties Modern) style of architecture and it resembles streamlined finger type school floorplans of the decade. The original Lot Whitcomb Elementary School consisted of a central core structure. Two single-level wings that each contained four classrooms protruded from this core on its western and eastern elevations. The school was more than doubled in size only a year later following the same design (and by the same architects), in 1959. Lot Whitcomb Elementary School retains much of its historic integrity from its 1958 and 1959 dates of construction. The only major alteration to the resource was the expansion of the southern half of the building in 1959.

The existing building is highly rational, symmetrical, and consistent in its design expression. It consists of a double-height central bar running north-to-south from the main entrance on SE Thompson Road. A large single-level segment of the building that contains administrative offices and central courtyard space extends from the northern end of this central bar, facing the school's parking lot that fronts SE Thompson Road. A total of six one-story rectangular classroom wings project from the central bar, three wings each on the western and eastern elevations. These six wings create four courtyards between them.

The northern elevation of the school is unchanged from its 1958 design. It faces SE Thompson Road and features the main entrance. Each of the two wings exhibits four evenly sized bays with storefront windows. A simple flat-roofed covered walkway sits in front of the central core structure. The single-height portion of the central core exhibits a row of thirteen windows, four of which contain lower operable sections. A brick veneer band wraps the building below these windows. A double-door entry is located on either side of the row of windows on the inner-facing sides of the classroom wings. The double-height gymnasium is visible behind the single-level section of the core structure. It has vertical board siding and a shallowly-pitched gable roof.

The east and west sides of the building are very similar. Both have a series of solid brick veneer walls at the single-height wings, with the double-height multi-purpose room structure visible behind the classrooms on the southern end. The double-height structure is clad with a vertical board siding, and features a row of three double-ganged clerestory windows and a chimney stack towards the northern end of these side façades. The brick at the western classroom wing is punctuated by a double-door side entry to the school that leads to the freestanding gymnasium.

In addition to the school building itself, a two-story rectangular gymnasium auxiliary building (2001) with a metal gable roof exists close to the northwestern corner of the building. Three rectangular portable units lie in a row south of this gym at the southwestern corner of the academic building. The school's playground lies directly south of the main building.



II. Building History and Context:

During World War II, local growth and development in Milwaukie mostly came to a halt. Ship yard workers did come to the wider Portland region to work at the industry centers along the Columbia and Willamette Rivers, but these population gains were temporary. Milwaukie was still very small during the 1940s, even with the city's population growing to about 5,000 residents during that decade. During the 1950s and 1960s, Milwaukie's population almost doubled twice over, reaching 16,444 by 1970. This expansion occurred towards the east, with primarily new suburban development. North Clackamas School District had closed many of its schools in the decade following World War II due to lack of funding. However, this period was immediately followed by an influx of students to the area. Portland was quickly expanding to the urban growth boundary that we know now, and Milwaukie was becoming more of a bedroom community within the metropolitan region. The reasons for this suburban growth were the continuing broad national trend towards suburbanization and increased reliance on the automobile, combined with the baby boom brought on by the end of the war. With a high demand for more organized schooling in these outlying areas, the North Clackamas School District (at that time Milwaukie School District No. 1) sought funding via public bonds for new school construction.

Lot Whitcomb was the first elementary school to be established in the Central Northeast Neighborhood community and represented its era in its design. Mid-20th century modern schools aimed to provide efficient use of space and effective learning methods. Flexibility of uses, access to natural light and air, and standardized materials and details were key features of these modern school designs. Immediately after its construction, the school district was still grappling with unprecedented population shifts and the school was expanded only a year later. The Oregonian reported in August 1959 that "tremendous home developments in the Milwaukie area indicate a projected enrollment in grades one through eight of over 4,150 students by 1961-62, which is 680 more than were enrolled during the 1958-59 school year."

The school was named after Lot Whitcomb, who was the founder of the town of Milwaukie in 1848. Whitcomb had purchased a Donation Land Claim of about 600 acres from an earlier settler and hoped the town's location on the Willamette River would ensure its viability as a shipping and transportation hub. Whitcomb even built and launched a steamer in 1850, named the "Lot Whitcomb." Milwaukie rivaled Portland at this time in shipping services and Whitcomb's sternwheeler helped to propel an early shipbuilding industry.

Freeman, Hayslip, Tuft & Hewlett/ Hayslip, Tuft, Hewlett & Jamison

The architect of Lot Whitcomb Elementary in 1958 was the Portland firm of Freeman, Hayslip, Tuft & Hewlett. The firm was known primarily for their work on schools and Elk Lodges in the Willamette valley. Claud N. Freeman had attended Oregon State College, and started a practice in Portland in 1922, specializing in the design of schools. He partnered with Sydney B. Hayslip starting in 1942, and the firm went through several iterations with other partners including Tuft and Hewlett. Hayslip practiced architecture for over forty years in Portland after attending the University of Oregon. He had worked for several prominent Northwest architecture firms including that of the former district architect for Portland Public Schools, Floyd A.Naramore, before entering into practice with Freeman. Stewart Tuft, also a graduate of the University of Oregon, worked for several architects and the Housing Authority of Portland before joining the firm in 1948. Palmer A Hewlett Jr. was in practice for about 30 years, joining the firm in 1948 and becoming a partner in 1952. Freeman retired in 1957-58, and subsequently Hewlett and James Jamison, who also became a partner in 1957-58, left the firm together in 1959 to form their own partnership.

Freeman Hayslip & Tuft designed a number of schools such as Peninsula School in Portland, 1952. After Hewlett joined the firm, as Freeman, Hayslip, Tuft & Hewlett, the firm designed North Eugene High School, 1957; Russellville Grade School in Portland, 1957; and non-school buildings such as the Loyal Order of Moose Lodge No 686 in Eugene OR, 1956 and the Central Presbyterian Church in Eugene OR, 1956.

Lot Whitcomb Elementary, Milwaukie, Oregon State Level Documentation Mitigation for Adverse Effects

III. Bibliography:

Beebe, Craig, "River, rails and roads: A changing community" Metro News (online) December 6, 2016. https://www.oregonmetro.gov/news/witness-history-milwaukie-through-years

Clackamas County Tax Assessor. *Clackamas County's Geographic Information System*. (online maps). http://cmap.clackamas.us/maps/cmap?address=7400%20SE%20Thompson%20Rd,%20Milwaukie,%2097222. Accessed 05 April 2018.:

Stoehr, O. "Milwaukie School District No. 1: Tract in Sec. 32, T.1S.R.2E., W.M." (survey map). Portland, Oregon: February 1958.

Stoehr, O. "Survey of Tract in Sec. 32, T.1S.R.2E., W.M. for Milwaukie School District No. 1." (survey maps). Portland, Oregon: December 1952.

Entrix, "Robert Gray Middle School." Portland Public Schools Historic Building Assessment, September 2009.

Oregonian newspaper articles:

"Record Roll Due In Milwaukie." The Oregonian. 30 August 1958.

"Bonds Posed at Milwaukie." The Oregonian. 20 August 1959.

"School Construction Bonds Approved." The Sunday Oregonian. 04 October 1959.

"All But Two Schools Return To Operation." The Oregonian. 17 October 1962.

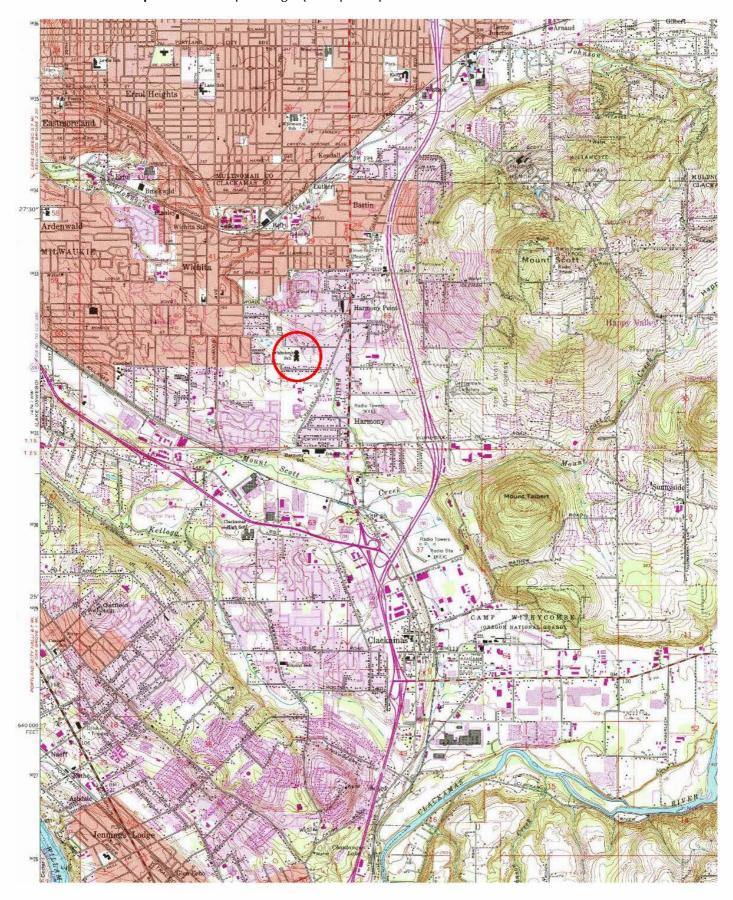
"Portland District Plans Major Additions." The Sunday Oregonian. 25 August 1963.

Ritz, Richard Ellison. *Architects of Oregon, A Biographical Dictionary of Architects Deceased-19th and 20th Centuries*. Portland, OR: Lair Hill Publishing, 2002.

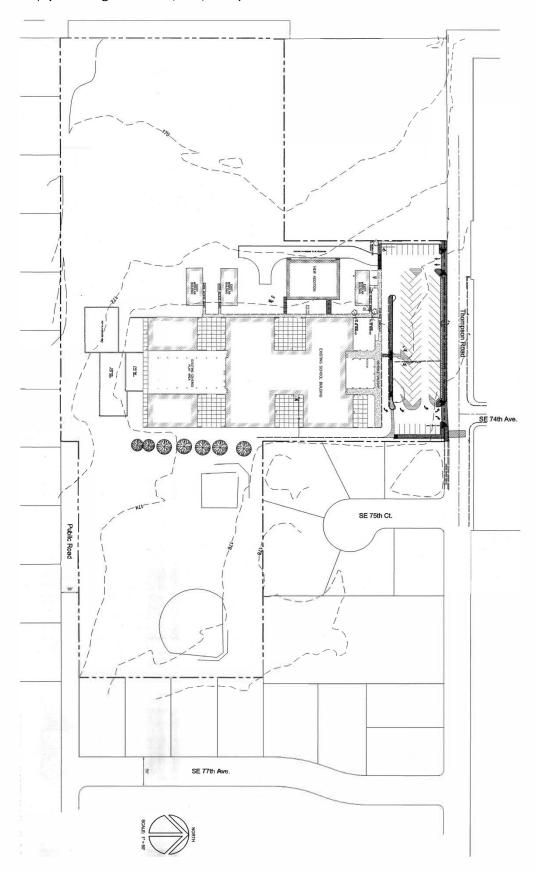
United States Department of the Interior Geological Survey. "Gladstone Quadrangle, Oregon." 7.5-minute series topographical map. 1961. Scale: 1:24000. https://ngmdb.usgs.gov/topoview/viewer/#4/ 40.00/-100.00. Accessed 05 April 2018.



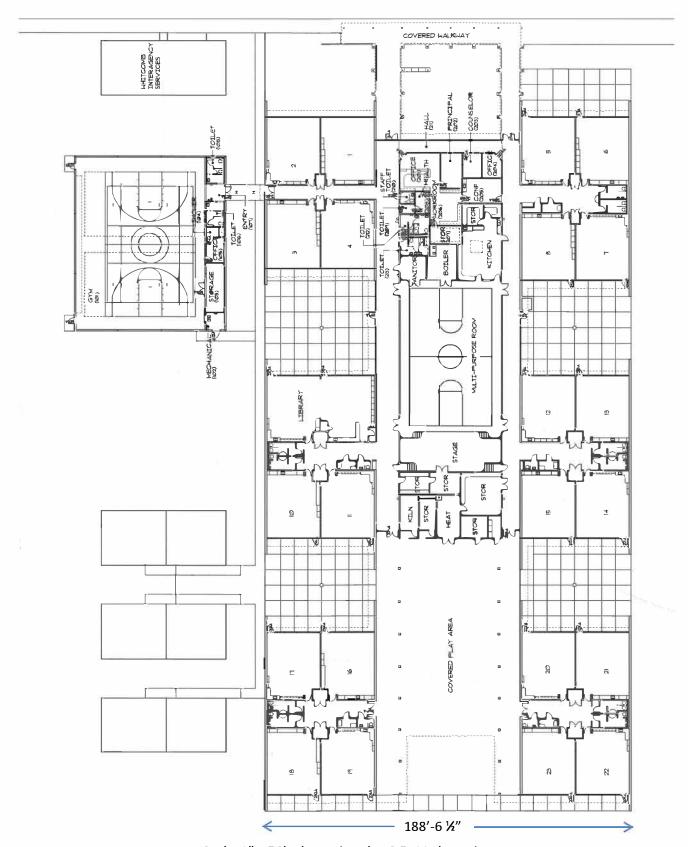
IV. **USGS Map** "Gladstone" quadrangle (1961 partial). Site is circled in red.



V. Site Plan (by Planning Resources, Inc., 2001)







Scale: 1" = 50' when printed at 8.5x11 sheet size

VII. Photographs: Lot Whitcomb Elementary, taken in 2017 by Opsis Architects (unless otherwise noted).



Bing Maps Birds-Eye View, 2018 (north is down)







Google Earth Street view, August 2017, looking from SE Thompson Road at the gymnasium fronting the parking lot





Views: (upper) front of building, looking southeast; (lower) looking west along front façade.







Peter Meijer Architect, PC | 605 NE 21st Avenue, Suite 200, Portland, OR 97232 | 503.517.0283 | www.pmapdx.com





Views: West-facing courtyards, looking east: (upper) north courtyard, (lower) south courtyard.







Views: Back (south side) of building



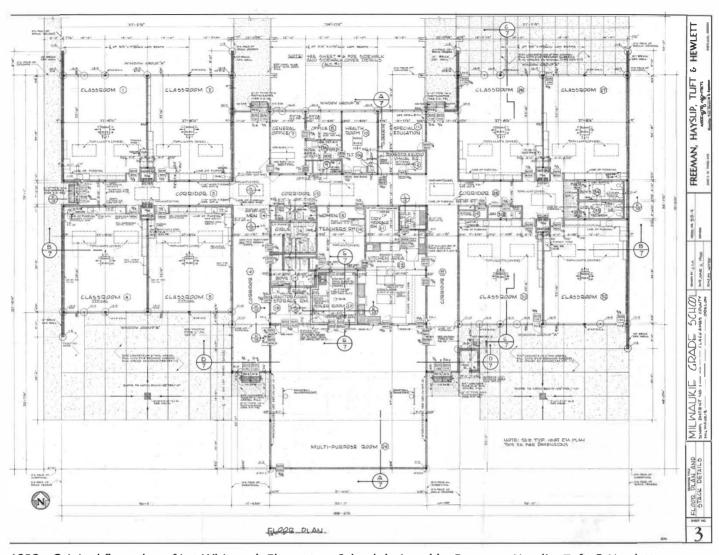
View: Looking northwest into covered play area at rear of building.



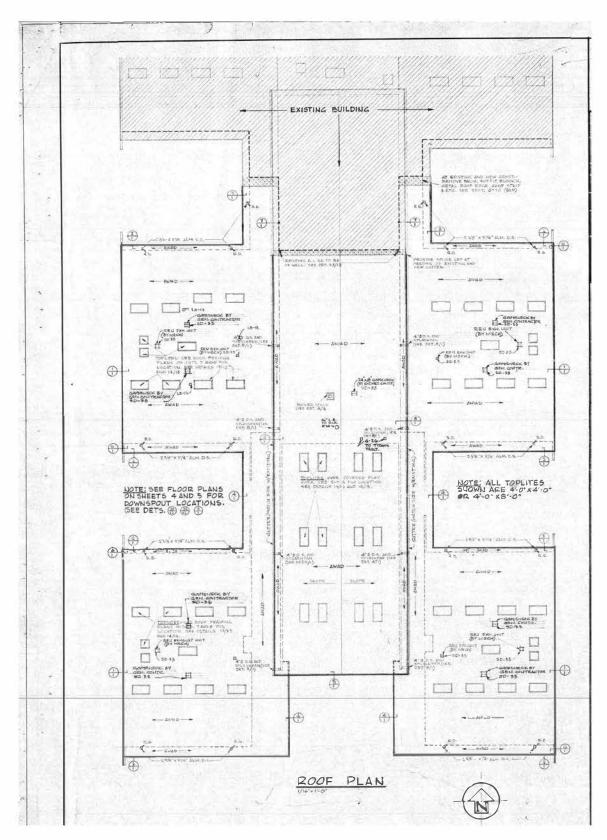
Views: Existing corridor views within the building.



VIII. Archival Materials: as noted



1958—Original floor plan of Lot Whitcomb Elementary School designed by Freeman, Hayslip, Tuft, & Hewlett.



1959—Roof plan of addition to Whitcomb Elementary School designed by Hayslip, Tuft, Hewlett & Jamison.



Image from 1977 "The Let Whitcomb Warriers" school publication