



LPB-428/80

City of Seattle
Department of Community Development/Office of Urban Conservation

Landmark Nomination Form

Name Grover Cleveland High School Year Built 1927
(Common, present or historic)

Street and Number 5511 - 15th Avenue South

Assessor's File No. _____

Legal Description Plat Name _____ Block _____ Lot _____

Present Owner Seattle Public School System Present Use High School

Address 815 Fourth Avenue North, Seattle

Original Owner Seattle Public School System Original Use High School

Architect F. A. Naramore Builder Dolph Jones

Description: Present and original (if known) physical appearance and characteristics

PREAMBLE:

The Seattle Office of Urban Conservation conducted a city-wide Inventory of Historic Resources in 1979, and that Inventory is continually being supplemented by further research and investigation by the office. Preparation of nominations for individual structures and groups is part of that ongoing process. In research of public school buildings it has been revealed the conscientious and continuing effort of the School District to develop the best of uniform standards to be applied to school building projects in the City. With respect to primary schools, this effort extended from the straightforward, flexible, well lighted brick or frame buildings, to less pretentious, horizontal structures. As the need for high schools increased with the growth of the City, the same philosophies and guidelines were employed, but beyond that, more often than not more pretentious design was employed (in most cases), and significant siting was usually exploited, making these structures significant not only to their neighborhoods (communities), but to the City-scape as well.

THE BUILDINGS:

Grover Cleveland High School is a case in point. Dominantly sited on southwest Beacon Hill, overlooking the industrialized Duwamish Valley, and highly visible from the railroad, Highway 99 and I-5 Freeway, the complex is an important visual element of south Seattle.

On the western front the major mass of the building rises high above a major playfield: three stories of neo-georgian design executed in brick with terra cotta trim, punctuated at the center with a projecting pavilion featuring three arched entrances with brick voussoirs and terra cotta keystones, surmounted by a two-story, three part pedimented bay featuring two colossal Corinthian columns, richly pedimented windows and balcony at the second floor. In contrast to some of the earlier (and later) schools which clearly expressed in their fenestration and structure the disposition of the internal volumes (classrooms), the architect in this case has elected to pursue the palace form of composition, with extensive series of windows, unbroken, at each of the three floors of the wings flanking the central pavilion, terminating at each end with slightly projecting and narrow pavilions. The entire composition is reminiscent of the Wren wing of Hampton Court Palace, and follows in the renaissance tradition of uniting several buildings, spaces or functions behind one dominating or imposed facade (i.e., Place Vendome, Paris, Royal Crescent, Bath). Augmenting this approach, the entire first floor is treated as a base-story, with recessed (rusticated) courses of brick. The entire structure is enriched with terra cotta string courses, cornice and other elements.

In contrast to many other schools in the area (other than for now extinct Broadway High School) too often when additions have been made to existing plants, they have been appallingly insensitive. Additions made to the original plant have been handled sensitively and complement the design: first the wing added to the north in 1957, and second, the new gymnasium wing added to the south in 1969-70. This latter addition departs from the stylistic

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nature of the earlier structures, but nonetheless has been handled sympathetically with respect to scale, materials and juncture to the original building

The vine covered walls of the rear of the building along 15th Avenue South portions of which are unbroken by fenestration, present a handsome urban wall along this rather nondescript street. The neo classic entrance gateway on Lucile Street to the north, with stairs leading into the "campus" is noteworthy.

Statement of significance

The significance of Grover Cleveland High School lies in its relationship to the community; its outstanding siting; the excellence of its original architecture; and the sensitivity of the additions to the original facility. The original design was executed by one of Seattle's outstanding architects: Floyd Naramore, founding member of Naramore, Bain, Brady and Johanson, one of Seattle's largest of most prestigious firms; and Mahlum and Mahlum for the 1969-70 addition, architects for North Seattle Community College and other significant structures in the City.

HISTORY: (from Seattle Public Schools History, 1961.)

The story of Cleveland High School goes back to the turn of the century when the Georgetown Mueller School developed a four-year high school on the top floor of the building. After Georgetown was annexed, this high school was dropped in the interest of economical school administration, and the South District residents had to send their children to Queen Anne, Broadway, and Franklin. This was not satisfactory, but it was felt the district would not grow sufficiently to warrant the construction of so expensive a building as a modern high school.

The residents continued to ask for a high school, however, and at the suggestion of Thomas R. Cole, then Superintendent of Seattle Schools, it was decided to plan a six-year junior-senior high school. In 1925 the School Board voted the construction of a building on Maple Hill which would be large enough to house the pupils of the upper six grades of the district. In anticipation of this, steps had been taken in 1923 toward establishing a high school by utilizing the seventh and eighth grade pupils from Georgetown, South Seattle, and Maple Schools. These pupils attended classes in the Georgetown building, and the next fall the pupils who finished the eighth grade at Concord and Van Asselt were added. There were sixty-seven pupils (three faculty members and a principal).

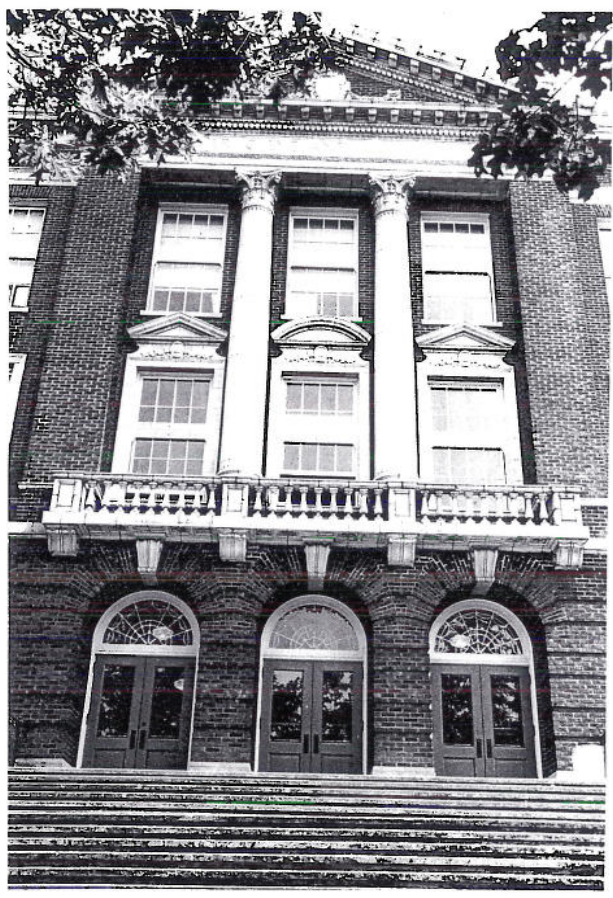
At this time the institution was called the Georgetown High School, however, in accordance with the general policy of the School Board to name high schools after prominent American statesmen, the name of Grover Cleveland was chosen before the school left the old building. When the transfer was made to the new high school, on January 3, 1927, the pupils carried their books from the Georgetown School, up the hill to the new building, making an impressive parade.

Cleveland always maintained a separate junior and senior high school, each having a completely different organization, although they were staffed by the same principal and vice-principal. In June 1927, when the first class graduated, there were 52 who received their diplomas.

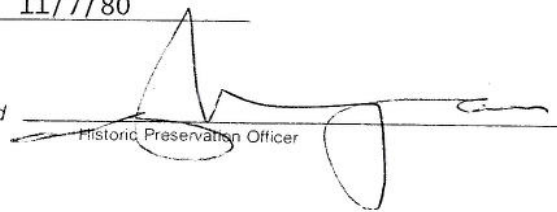
Statement of significance

The high school that was built in 1927 remained the same until the fall of 1957 when a new wing was added on the north side of the school. This wing includes up-to-date laboratories in metal shop, art, band, and choir. At the same time the wood shop and mechanical drawing rooms were remodeled. Other classrooms that were made over at this time were chemistry, physics, food and clothing rooms. (In 1969 and 1970 a new gymnasium designed by Mahlum and Associates was added).

Photographs:



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 Date 11/7/80

Reviewed  Historic Preservation Officer Date 11/11/80