



The City of Seattle

Landmarks Preservation Board

Mailing Address: PO Box 94649 Seattle WA 98124-4649
Street Address: 700 5th Ave Suite 1700

REPORT ON DESIGNATION

LPB 615/14

Name and Address of Property: McGilvra Elementary School – 1617 38th Avenue East

Legal Description: Block 7 Replat of McGilvra's 3rd Addition as recorded in Volume 6 of Plats, Page 34, Records of King County, Seattle, Washington.

Together with vacated portion of 37th Avenue East, Vacation Ordinance No. 96541, also vacated portion of East Garfield Street and East Blaine Street, Vacation Ordinance No. 82272.

At the public meeting held on October 15, 2014 the City of Seattle's Landmarks Preservation Board voted to approve designation of the McGilvra Elementary School at 1617 38th Avenue East as a Seattle Landmark based upon satisfaction of the following standard for designation of SMC 25.12.350:

- C. *It is associated in a significant way with a significant aspect of the cultural, political, or economic heritage of the community, City, state or nation.*
- D. *It embodies the distinctive visible characteristics of an architectural style, or period, or a method of construction.*
- F. *Because of its prominence of spatial location, contrasts of siting, age, or scale, it is an easily identifiable visual feature of its neighborhood or the City and contributes to the distinctive quality or identity of such neighborhood or the City.*

DESCRIPTION

Site and Neighborhood Context

McGilvra Elementary School is a multi-building facility located in the Madison Park neighborhood, and occupies the entire city block bounded by East Blaine Street, East Garfield Street, 38th Avenue East, and 37th Avenue East. The principal entrance to the grounds is along 38th Avenue East. The 37th Avenue East right-of-way is vacated and is included as part of the school property; thus, the back part of the school grounds is separated from the adjacent

Broadmoor Golf Course to the west by only a fence and landscaping. Beyond Broadmoor to the west is the Washington Park Arboretum.

The subject property is a rectangle in plan, measuring approximately 440 feet by 300 feet, and is oriented north to south. The site is level, on a block that slopes downward approximately 16 feet from southwest corner to northeast corner, so that the southwest edge of the property is partly held by a retaining wall, and the northeast corner and east part of the property sits approximately five feet above the sidewalk and is retained by a landscaped berm.

The main 1913 school building is located at the center of the site, with a one-story projecting classroom wing to the north, which was constructed in 1940. On the east or front side of the main school building is an asphalt and concrete paved entrance plaza with a path leading eastward to steps down to the sidewalk. Flanking the path are two raised play areas with playground equipment and a wood-chip play surface.

On the west side of the main school building is an attached, original, one-story projecting wing which contains the boiler room and two large restrooms for the students. Behind this wing, against and extending along the west property line, is the 1972 gymnasium and connected exterior covered playcourt, which together occupies a 163 foot by 41 foot rectangle in plan.

Between the covered playcourt and the 1940 main building classroom wing are two portable classrooms, which date to the 1990s.

Occupying the southern third of the site is a grassy soccer/sports field. The rest of the interstitial property between the various school buildings is hardscaped with asphalt or concrete. There are several large, mature fir trees located at the center of the north end of the property, and at two flanking the entrance path at the center of the east property line. A mature boxwood hedge lines the sidewalk along 38th Avenue East.

The blocks surrounding the site consist of primarily single-family homes and quiet, tree-lined streets. The school is not visible from East Madison Street, the main arterial which cuts through the neighborhood at an angle, although located only one to two blocks north and west of it. Small, neighborhood commercial buildings line East Madison Street for approximately three blocks towards the lake, beginning approximately two blocks east of the subject site. Madison Park (the park) and the Lake Washington waterfront are located five blocks to the east of the site.

A single nearby designated Seattle landmark is the Samuel Hyde house, located two blocks south at 38th Avenue East and East Madison Street, which today is occupied by the Russian consulate.

Building description

Main building exterior and structure

The main school building was constructed in 1913, with a 1940 addition on the north side. The main building is massed as a simple, symmetrical, three-story rectangular box in form, in a

simplified Beaux Arts style. The main mass of the building measures approximately 60 by 120 feet in plan, and contains classrooms, offices, and other primary rooms for instruction. The height of the main building is approximately 39 feet high to the roof eave, with approximately 24 additional feet in height to the roof peak. A one-story wing, measuring approximately 43 by 31 feet overall, projects from the rear of the building, and houses the boiler room, student restrooms, and a former coal shed associated with the boiler room.

Building structure is a reinforced concrete and steel frame, on a foundation of concrete spread footings, with the roof supported by heavy timber trusses. Exterior walls are red and buff brick on a cement base, with limited terracotta detail. The moderately pitched hipped roof is prominent, with a roof eave marked by a sheet copper boxed cornice and block modillions. The roof is punctuated by three large Swartwout rotary vents, original to the building, which are designed to turn with the wind. The roof also features a total of five skylights on the north, south, and west elevations to light the attic and the tops of interior stairwells.

A partly enclosed brick and terracotta flat-roofed entry porch projects from the front of the building, enclosing stairs which lead up to the main entrance on the second, or main, floor. The porch is somewhat more ornate than the rest of the building, being the focus of the front elevation, with the name "J. J. McGILVRA SCHOOL" in a terracotta band above the entry, and additional terracotta bands, parapet coping, and a keystone and swag motif at the entry providing additional embellishment.

The rest of the front elevation is symmetrically composed of five unequal bays of slightly recessed window panels defining brick piers, and a traditional tripartite vertical arrangement of base (first floor), middle (second and third floors), and top (roof). The most prominent horizontal terracotta band is a beltcourse separating the first and second floors. Other embellishment includes bands of buff brick at the cornice line, window headers, and sills, which offers contrast to the field of red brick.

Windows are separated by narrow masonry piers, and clustered into groups of two, three, or five, giving some indication of the nature of the classrooms behind. Typical windows on the second and third floors are wood sash, measure 9 foot 3 inches by 5 feet wide, are elongated in proportion, and arranged in a three-over-three light configuration. First floor windows are stouter, at 7 foot 6 inches in height.

Side elevations are expanses of brick, marked only by prominent central windows composed of two ganged windows, arranged in the center, lighting the central corridor of each floor. At the first floor are double doors with side lights and transom. There is an additional single door at the east side of the south elevation at ground level, providing access from the outside to the lunchroom.

The rear elevation is more loosely organized, but incorporates the same window types and sizes as the front elevation. Two building exits from the stairwells are located at the north and south ends of the first floor, a half-level up, reached by exterior concrete steps. Above them are mid-floor windows which light the upper floor stair landings. Other fenestration lights classrooms and cloakrooms.

Also visible at the rear elevation is the projecting, one-story, flat-roofed boiler room/restroom wing. Double doors on the north and south sides here exit directly to grade. Exterior walls here are clad with a dark buff brick on a stucco finished concrete base, with terracotta coping at the parapet. Each of the three visible elevations of this wing have more utilitarian fenestration than the rest of the building, typically wood sash in a three over three double-hung configuration. Four windows at the northwest corner of the boiler room/restroom wing have been bricked in, at an unknown date. A square chimney stack from the boiler room engages the center of the rear elevation of the main building.

On the north side of the original 1913 building is the 1940 one-story classroom addition, which measures approximately 71 feet by 72 feet in plan, and 19 feet in height. The height corresponds approximately to the mid-level height of the second floor of the adjacent 1913 building. Structure is reinforced concrete exterior walls with a wood framed flat roof supported by steel wide flange beams. The exterior cladding consists of red and buff brick resting on a dash-coat finished concrete base, with an 18 inch decorative terracotta band and 6 inch terracotta coping at the parapet. Exterior walls on the north and south sides are arranged into six equal window bays, separated by slightly projecting and truncated 3 foot 6 inch wide brick wall piers (which are 4 foot 3 inches at the end bays). The concrete base is modulated in conjunction with the wall piers. Windows in the bays are wood sash, 7 foot 6 inches wide, and 10 foot 9 inches tall, divided by a heavy vertical center mullion, and a heavy horizontal mullion dividing the upper third from the lower two-thirds. The portion of the window assembly below the horizontal mullion consists of two operable two-over-two single-hung sash. Above the mullions are two fixed, two-light sash. The windows are protected with wire grilles. The east elevation of the 1940 addition is windowless, although a building entrance, with projecting masonry surround, is located at the center.

Main building interior

The main entry on the east side of the building consists of a porch and stairhall leading directly to the second floor. Second and third floor ceiling heights measure approximately 12 feet 6 inches. The first floor ceiling height measures approximately 10 feet 6 inches, except at the 1940 north wing addition, where the ceiling height measures 15 foot 7 inches.

The second floor—which serves as the main floor of the building—was originally organized by a wide central double-loaded corridor, oriented lengthwise, with stairwells at the north and south ends, and having four classrooms, administrative offices, and support spaces along its length. In 1973, this floor underwent substantial renovations. Today, the floor is dominated by a large Learning Resource Center (library), which was formed in 1973 by removing walls between two classrooms and the corridor, leaving a wide open space lit by west-facing windows. The remaining structural piers in this area support a sculptural lowered ceiling and light fixture assembly, as well as in the adjoining computer room. The rest of the second floor consists of expanded administrative offices, the nurse's office, copy room, and restrooms. The computer room and part of the faculty room on this floor were classrooms when originally built, and some original features (such as blackboards and trim) remain.

The third floor layout closely resembles its original 1913 configuration, with five classrooms organized around the double-loaded corridor, with the stairwells at the ends of the corridor. A small restroom is located next to the south stairwell, and appears to retain original fixtures, including shaped bathroom stall doors with nickel railings. Adjacent to the north stairwell is an elevator, installed in 1999, which replaced another small bathroom which had existed at that location.

The third floor classrooms are largely intact, and feature fir floors, plaster walls, and original casework at windows and doors. Classroom interiors typically include a wooden picture rail high on the wall, a trimmed tack board and blackboard with wood chalk tray, a built-in book case, and floor molding. In some cases, modern “whiteboards” have been attached on top of original blackboards. Third floor classrooms also each have associated cloakrooms, which are accessed from the classroom. Cloakrooms are typically lit by a single window, fitted with original hook rails for coats, and often used for minor storage.

A fifth classroom on the third floor, located at the center of the east side of the corridor, was originally built as a domestic science classroom. Two structural columns are located in the middle of the room, and a relight window with a wooden service counter is located on the west wall facing the main building corridor. Although now covered by a whiteboard and bulletin board, the window is intact and features a fixed transom above with operable, tri-folding lights below. In the open position, the window apparently functioned as a serving counter.

Between the second and third floors, occupying the intermediate stair landings of both the north and south stairwells, are small conference rooms lit by west-facing windows.

The attic, accessed by the two corridor stairs beyond the third floor, is sizeable, measuring approximately 25 feet in height at the roof peak. The attic space is divided into three approximately equal sections by full height fire walls, each with a single door opening. The roof structure of heavy timber posts and heavy timber trusses is exposed, and steel ties installed during recent seismic upgrade work is visible. Framed assemblies supporting the three large rotary vents on the roof are visible, and include ladders which provide access for their maintenance.

At the lowest level of the building, the first floor functions as a basement level but is almost entirely above grade. The first floor occupies considerably more area than the second and third floors, due to the boiler room/restroom wing and the 1940 wing addition on this level. Within the original 1913 portion of this floor are a lunchroom, an art area, storage, and one classroom (on the original plans these spaces were identified as girls’ and boys’ play rooms, a meeting room, and a manual training room). The two building stairwells exit directly to the west side of the building at this level. The central corridor on this level turns and runs along the west side of the building, because the center of this floor is occupied by a fan room/mechanical space. The two large boys’ and girls’ restrooms, extending in the one-story wing to the west, are accessed from this corridor. The boiler room, also in this wing, is partly below grade and accessed by an interior ramp. The original 1913 cast iron boiler is intact and functioning, and prominently features raised letters signifying the date, the maker “Ernst Hardware & Plumbing Co.,” and

the client "Seattle School District No. 1." On the west side of the boiler room is a former coal bin.

The 1940 addition on the north contains four classrooms (one originally used as the school library) along a double-loaded corridor, seamlessly connected to the 1913 corridor. Classrooms within the 1940 wing have higher ceilings than the other classrooms, but are otherwise similarly furnished with original blackboards, built-in book cases, tack boards, trim, casework, and so forth. There are no cloakrooms associated with these classrooms, as in the 1913 classrooms. Finally, the central corridor of the 1940 wing is lined with students' lockers, and the corridor ends with double doors providing access to the north side of the building.

Gymnasium exterior and interior

The gymnasium building overall is an approximately 164 by 43 foot structure oriented north-south, consisting of an enclosed 93 by 43 foot indoor basketball court with an entry vestibule, storage, and restrooms at the south end, and a 71 by 43 foot covered exterior playcourt extending northward from it. While the overall building height measures approximately 17 feet, the portion of the building housing the basketball court is approximately two feet higher.

Building structure consists of reinforced concrete piers within concrete block walls, supporting glue-laminated beams on a 12 foot bay module. The southernmost bay, containing the vestibule, storage, and restrooms, is 20 feet wide. The flat roof is composed of 3" glued laminated tongue and groove decking.

Exterior cladding is buff colored brick between the reinforced concrete block structural piers, which project approximately an inch beyond the plane of the building. The exterior walls are windowless. There are two double-door entries at the north and south ends of the east elevation. The southern or main entry, leading into the entry vestibule, features a brick arch header.

Interior walls are painted concrete block. Portions of the interior walls are acoustical concrete block, identified by vertical slots on the block face. Floors in the restrooms, entry vestibule, and storage room are concrete, while the floor in the basketball court are contemporary gymnasium court surfacing over a reinforced concrete slab.

The northernmost six 12 foot bays constitute the exterior covered playcourt. This portion of the structure is exposed glue-laminated beams supported by 6 x 6 inch steel tube columns on the east, and reinforced concrete piers on the west. The north and east elevations are open and unenclosed by walls, whereas the south and west walls are concrete block. On the north elevation, the beam, steel tube, and reinforced concrete pier assembly has been strengthened in recent years by diagonally crossed cables with turnbuckles. The floor of the outside playcourt is concrete.

Portable Buildings

Two freestanding portable buildings are located between the main building north wing and the gymnasium, and are accessed by wood-framed ramps on their east sides. The portables are movable, contemporary, and have no historic value.

Summary of Primary Alterations

Main building

After the original 1913 construction of the main school building, and the 1940 classroom wing addition on the north side, there appear to have been few alterations for several decades. In 1962, minor interior alterations were carried out, and in 1970 the entire building was equipped with an automatic sprinkler system. In 1971, the concrete retaining wall at the southwest property lines was constructed, and the initial playground was regraded and installed. In 1972, the gymnasium building was constructed. In 1973, interior alterations to the first floor of the main building removed walls separating classrooms from the corridor and installed new ceiling and wall finishes, creating one large Learning Resource Center. Additionally, extensive interior alterations to the first floor administrative offices (principal, teacher's lounge and kitchen, copy and mail room) enlarged the space and installed new cabinetry and finishes.

Drawings dated 1979 by MacDonald McLaren Hammond consulting engineers are on file for general seismic improvements, including removal of the top third of the boiler room chimney at the rear of the building. Drawings dated 1983 by The Chervenak Architects detail minor repairs and maintenance to the roof skylights and cornice of the main building, and reroofing of the gymnasium. In 2003, the north portion of the property was regraded and the current sports field installed, following drawings by Kuhn Associates civil engineers. In 2004, the main building roof and gymnasium roof were replaced with drawings prepared by DKA architects; the work included additional seismic upgrades. In 2008, drawings prepared by Schemata Workshop detailed repair work and wood window refurbishment, repairs to the play area in front of the main school building, and mechanical upgrades.

Building permits were on file for the following work (other than electrical or mechanical):

1913	Construction of original building. (Edgar Blair, architect)
1940	One-story, four classroom addition on north side. (Naramore & Brady, arch.)
1962	Alter portion of first floor of building. (\$4,000)
1970	Install automatic sprinkler system. (\$11,000)
1973	Office area remodel, existing building. (\$20,000)
1992	Seismic retrofit.
1999	Installation of elevator.
2002	Relocate classroom and cafeteria.
2004	Repair/replace roofing; voluntary seismic upgrades.

Gymnasium

The gymnasium appears to have had few alterations after its 1972 construction, other than roof repairs described above.

Dates of Current Site Elements

- 1913 – Berms along north (E. Blaine Street) and east (38th Avenue E.) edges of property; steps leading from playfield to 38th Avenue E.
- 1940 – Steps to E. Blaine Street from north building addition.

- 1941 – Northern two-thirds of site has been paved since at least 1941.
- 1968 – Former 37th Avenue E. right of way vacated.
- 2001 – Retaining walls along south and near the southwest property lines, new playfield at south third of site, and associated fencing. Replaced playfield which had existed since at least the 1960s (based on photos), and had been resurfaced as part of c.1972 facility construction and improvements.
- Post-2001 – Garden area south of gymnasium and behind (west of) playfield fence.
- 2008 – Raised playground areas flanking main entrance path to 38th Avenue E., and paved area between. The original 1913 path from main entrance was plank, then later paved.

SIGNIFICANCE

Development of the Madison Park neighborhood

McGilvra Elementary School is located in the Madison Park neighborhood, north of Madison Street, just to the east of the Broadmoor Golf Course.

The Madison Park neighborhood was originally developed by Judge John J. McGilvra (1827-1903), an Illinois native who had moved to Olympia, Washington, in 1861 to serve as United States attorney for the Territory of Washington, at the request of his close friend, Abraham Lincoln. After serving for two years, he moved to Seattle in 1864 and purchased 420 acres along Lake Washington—essentially today’s Madison Park neighborhood. McGilvra also cut a road, today’s Madison Street, in order to reach his property from downtown. In 1867 he and his wife built a home, called Laurel Shade, at what is today East Garfield Street and 42nd Avenue East, approximately five blocks east of the subject site. They established a dock at the foot of Madison Street, which became a popular location for small ferries offering transportation across and around the lake. McGilvra practiced law in Seattle, and established a partnership with his son-in-law, Judge Thomas Burke. Around 1900, he also donated land for a building for the Washington Pioneers Association, today located at the foot of East Blaine Street. A hall was built there in 1910 with funds from the Denny family, and the structure is now one of the oldest in the neighborhood.

McGilvra platted most of his property in the 1880s to attract development to the somewhat isolated site. Lots were not sold per se; instead, builders were required to pay an annual rent, and follow McGilvra’s stipulation that only “cottages” could be built—a condition that continued until the 1920s. McGilvra also developed a shoreline park for public use—Madison Park—and established in 1889-1891 a cable car along Madison Street to facilitate easier access for the public. This was one of the earliest streetcar lines in the city, and helped develop Madison Street into a major thoroughfare in later years.

The popular Madison Park included an ornate boathouse, boat rentals, piers, a promenade along the shore, gardens and greenhouses, dance floors and bandstands, a theater, refreshments, and Seattle’s first baseball diamond. The site was the location of musical bands, Vaudeville shows, and was perhaps less a park than an amusement center—so much so that it was not

included in the 1902-03 Olmsted Brothers development plan for the Seattle park system. The site was briefly expanded and operated as “White City Park,” an admissions-only amusement park, with a rollercoaster and Ferris wheel and other concessions re-used from the Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition, from 1906 to 1912. In 1917, the construction of the Lake Washington Ship Canal and the Montlake Cut resulted in the level of Lake Washington dropping nine feet, and the park was enlarged with the newly-exposed shoreline land. In 1922, the land was transferred to the City of Seattle parks department, which eventually removed or replaced all of these early buildings over time.

Despite the popularity of the park and ferry dock, and a small commercial core along Madison Street developing, the neighborhood grew slowly in the early decades of the 1900s. North of Madison Street, between 39th and 42nd Avenues North, the Western Washington Fair Grounds had been developed on McGilvra’s property by 1908. The site featured a large oval track and covered grandstand for horse racing, livestock shows, and motorcycle racing. The 1912 Baist map shows both White City Park and the Fair Grounds, but relatively light single-family development throughout the neighborhood. On the subject site, the 1912 map shows the Lake School, the predecessor to the subject building.

West of the growing Madison Park neighborhood was Washington Park, which had previously been 200 acres of forested land logged off by the Puget Mill Company, a division of the Pope & Talbot timber company, in the 1880s. After logging, the company planned to sell the site as a residential development. In exchange for the city extending utilities and services, the Puget Mill Company in 1900 transferred the western portion of its holdings to the city, which became the core of Washington Park (and enlarged by 1938 with additional donations). The remaining portion was developed by Puget Mill Company as Broadmoor, a private 18-hole golf course and exclusive and gated residential neighborhood, with construction commencing in 1925. The large golf clubhouse and numerous residences in Broadmoor were designed by prominent Seattle architectural firms in the 1920s through 1940s, often in elaborate historicist styles.

The Madison Park neighborhood grew steadily in the 1920s through 1950 with single family houses on medium-sized lots. By 1929, maps and aerial photos show the neighborhood largely built out south of Madison Street, east of 41st Avenue East, and one block to the north and south of the subject site. The blocks directly north of the subject site—east of McGilvra Boulevard and north of East Blaine Street, particularly north of East Newton Street—were not fully developed until the 1950s and beyond. Today, the neighborhood is characterized largely by single-family homes on tree-lined streets, small single-story commercial businesses scattered along Madison Street, and a relatively affluent population.

Development of the McGilvra Elementary School

The current campus of McGilvra Elementary School consists of the main building, which was constructed in 1913 with a single-story 1940 addition on the north side; a separate gymnasium building constructed in 1972 and located at the west side of the property, behind the main building; and two modern portable buildings located between the main building and the gymnasium.

The McGilvra School developed from Lake School, which was established in the 1890s for the rural neighborhood. The site was acquired from John McGilvra by the city in 1892 for \$9,000. The first Lake School building was constructed of wood in 1899, was situated at the south portion of the site, and consisted of two rooms for the 50-60 students and one teacher. In 1902, the school became an annex of the larger Longfellow School, which was located approximately a mile and a half away along the Madison streetcar line at 301 21st Avenue East on the east flank of Capitol Hill (today known as Meany Middle School). The two facilities shared the same principal.

In 1911, a third classroom was added to the Lake School building, but the school rapidly outgrew its facilities. Grades had to be taught in morning and afternoon sessions in order to accommodate all of the students. During the winter months, the afternoon session was dismissed an hour early because parents were worried about the children walking home through the woods after dark.

In December 1912, Seattle voters approved a \$675,000 bond for the construction of four new fireproof school buildings. In 1913, the wood-frame Lake School building on the subject site was demolished and replaced with the current masonry building designed by architect Edgar Blair. In 1914 the school name was changed from Lake School to J. J. McGilvra School, to honor John McGilvra, the original settler and developer of the Madison Park neighborhood.

Blair's nine-classroom, three-story design was intended to be replicated, and was used at the following locations, with additional drawings in the set to adapt the building to immediate site conditions:

- McGilvra Elementary (1913), the subject building of this report;
- McDonald Elementary (1914), at 114 North 54th Street;
- Concord Elementary (1915), at 722 South Concord Street, today a designated Seattle landmark.

According to Blair's drawings, the original McGilvra School followed the nine-classroom plan. McGilvra included four classrooms along a double-loaded corridor, two small restrooms, a teacher's room, and the principal's office on the second (main) floor; four classrooms and corridor, two small restrooms, and a domestic science room on the third floor; and boys and girls separate play rooms, a meeting room, a manual training room, storage, two large restrooms, and the boiler room at the first floor (or raised basement) level. The first floor level large restrooms and boiler room were (and are) housed in a separate but attached flat-roofed one-story wing at the rear.

Initially, the 1913 McGilvra School building was more than adequate for the number of students attending, and only four classrooms were used. By 1918, a total of six classrooms were in use for 246 students, and the school was finally no longer under the supervision of the Longfellow School principal. Average daily attendance in 1929 was 211 students; in 1934, it was 377.

In 1940, a one-story classroom wing was added to the north side of the building, designed by Naramore & Brady. The wing included four identically-sized rooms along a double-loaded corridor, serving as three classrooms and a new library.

The 1940 expansion increased the capacity of the school to 400, and enrollment grew over time. In 1944, enrollment numbered 466 students. The largest enrollment of the school recorded was 511 in 1952-53, but dropped to the 300s by the 1960s. In 1970, the school housed only the first through fourth grades as part of a larger plan to separate Central Area schools into elementary, middle, and high schools of four grades each. Numerous permits on file indicate that portable school buildings were often utilized to accommodate changing classroom needs.

In 1972, the gymnasium and outdoor covered playcourt, designed by Huggard & Associates, was constructed behind the main school building, in the recently-vacated 37th Avenue East right of way. It was considered to be the most modern in the district at the time.

Today, McGilvra is an elementary school for kindergarten through 5th grade, with approximately 290 students and 35 teachers and staff for the 2013-14 school year.

Edgar Blair, architect of the 1913 building

Edgar Blair was born in 1871 in Des Moines, Iowa to Rufus and Jessie Blair. His father was a florist, and his mother raised their two children, Edgar and his older sister. At some point early in his working career, Edgar was employed as an instructor of mathematics at Iowa State College in Des Moines.

By about 1900, Edgar had moved to New York City to attend Columbia University, where he received his undergraduate degree in architecture. Before 1904 (and moving often), he had worked as a draftsman for the prominent New York firm of McKim, Mead & White; as a draftsman for the Baltimore firm of Baldwin & Pennington, who were the regular architects for the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad; and as a draftsman for the Washington DC firm of Marye & Wright. Blair's education and work experience were grounded firmly in the Beaux-Arts tradition.

In 1904, Blair established his own firm in Washington DC, which operated about one year. In early 1906, Blair arrived in Seattle and was employed by James Stephen, who had served as the architect for the Seattle School District since 1898.

Stephen had designed numerous schools for the rapidly growing city and school district, including the wood-framed Green Lake School (1901, demolished) which was used as the "Model School Plan" for the elementary schools expected to be built in the following decade. The model plan system allowed a flexible and efficient phased approach to school construction, as the school population grew rapidly throughout the city. A central core of eight, twelve, or twenty rooms could be expanded with flanking wings as necessary, all in affordable wood construction. Although plans and interior finishes were standardized, exterior elevations could be detailed differently, allowing for a variety of architectural expressions to suit the neighborhood. School building projects underway in the early years when Blair was in the

office included Stevens School (1906), Latona (1906, altered), and Coe (1906-07, altered)—all of these based on this model school plan, or variations of it.

Shortly after Blair's arrival in the office, Stephen traveled across the United States to study other cities' schools in order to prepare a report on modern school design, construction, and equipment. From this, Stephen developed a second model plan, which was based on fireproof materials such as concrete, terracotta, and brick. The School Board approved the second model plan in 1908. Schools developed on this second model plan, which Blair may have worked on, include Colman (1909), Greenwood (1909) and Emerson (1908-09). These designs featured five classrooms arranged along a double-loaded corridor on the upper floor, and four classrooms on the first floor, with two stairwells at the corridor ends.

Other large projects in the office which would have likely required Blair's participation include the original portions of Lincoln High School (1906-07) and Queen Anne High School (1908-09); the latter was directly attributed to Blair in his obituary.

In 1909, with Blair as the head draftsman of the school board staff, Stephen resigned, in order to form a private architectural partnership with his son. Blair was appointed the architect for the Seattle School District, serving for nine years. In this capacity, he designed more than thirty schools and additions, including the following:

- Broadway High School auditorium addition (1909-11), the only remaining portion of Broadway High School.
- Franklin High School (1910-11), perhaps Blair's best work. This large, brick and terracotta Beaux-Arts composition features a pyramidal tile roof, monumental engaged columns, and ornate Classical details.
- Ballard High School (1912).
- Numerous elementary schools, including McGilvra Elementary School (1912-13), the subject of this report. *[See additional section below regarding Blair's elementary schools]*

Blair worked for the Seattle School District until 1918, when he was replaced by Floyd Naramore. After 1918, Blair was in private practice, although few examples of work from that period could be found for this report. One was a proposed apartment building valued at \$50,000 at 2405 Fourth Avenue in 1922, and another in 1923 valued at \$185,000 at Yale Avenue and Stewart Street. Additionally, he was one of three architects who served as consultants for the design of the Montlake Bridge in 1924.

His office was in the Crown Building at Second Avenue and James Street downtown, although by 1923 was located in the Epler Building, at Second Avenue and Columbia Street. He resided with his wife, son, and daughter in south Seattle near Seward Park.

In 1912, Blair became a member of the Washington State Chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA). During the 1920s, Blair was also a member of the Washington State Society of Architects, and served as an officer of the organization in various capacities in the early 1920s.

Blair died in Seattle in late 1924 at age 53, of complications following a surgery.

Blair's elementary schools

Edgar Blair designed approximately twenty elementary schools during his years with the Seattle School District, with some built as duplicates of each other (clustered together in the list below). Like Concord and McDonald Schools, McGilvra represents an excellent and highly unaltered example of Blair's remaining elementary school designs.

Wood-frame:

1910 Van Asselt

Nine-classroom brick schools:

1910	Gatewood	(Seattle Landmark)
1910	John Muir	(Significantly altered; originally called York School)
1910	West Woodland	(Demolished 1990)

1912	Ravenna	(Altered; repurposed as apartments)
1912	Jefferson	(Demolished 1985)

1913	Alki	(Demolished)
1913	Lawton	(Demolished)

1913	<u>McGilvra</u>	The subject building of this report
1914	McDonald	
1915	Concord	(Seattle Landmark)

"Intermediate" schools:

1913	Martin Luther King	(Originally called Harrison; significantly altered)
1914	North Queen Anne	(Now Northwest Center Child Development Program)
1918	Fauntleroy	
1919	Crown Hill	(Now Small Faces Child Development Center)

"Border" schools:

1917	Seward brick building	(Seattle Landmark)
1917	Latona addition	(Demolished)
1917	Madrona	(Significantly altered/demolished)
1917	Cooper	(Seattle Landmark, now Youngstown Cultural Arts Ctr.)
1918	John B. Allen addition	(Seattle Landmark)
1919	Lowell	

Wood-frame

The first elementary school attributed to Blair was Van Asselt, a wood-frame school closely based on the first Model School Plan developed by James Stephen.

Nine-classroom brick schools

Gatewood, Muir, and West Woodland—Blair's next three schools—were essentially continuations of the brick fireproof second Model School Plan designed by Stephen. These structures featured the relatively ornate, Jacobean detailing first used by Stephen. In plan, they had a total of nine classrooms—five arranged along a double-loaded corridor on the upper floor, and four classrooms on the first floor, with two stairwells at the corridor ends. This was the plan developed by Stephen, and followed at some of the last schools attributed to him, including Colman (1909), Greenwood (1909) and Emerson (1908-09).

The next seven schools—Ravenna, Jefferson, Alki, Lawton, McGilvra, McDonald, and Concord—all essentially followed this plan as well, but with differing exterior expressions. All seven resemble each other in form, composition, and materials, but with slight differences in fenestration, roof details, and exterior wall details. All are boxy, bilaterally symmetrical compositions, with high hipped roofs, a projecting enclosed entry porch, and primarily brick exteriors. The McGilvra school design appears to have developed directly from these two earlier precedents by Blair—a duplicate pair of schools completed in 1912, and another duplicate pair completed in 1913.

The first pair, Ravenna School at 6545 Ravenna Avenue Northeast (1911), and Jefferson School at 4720 42nd Avenue Southwest (1912, demolished), both featured a hipped gable projecting above the main hipped roof, at the main entrance porch, and wide, light-colored horizontal masonry bands at the basement level. The rear of the building featured additional gables, including a steeply pitched one at center. These additional gables helped to emphasize the verticality of the buildings, but also reflect a lingering picturesque aesthetic, more typical of the late nineteenth century. This aesthetic is also seen in the relatively more elaborate terracotta/cast stone and brick details at the main entrance, cornice, and windows of Ravenna and Jefferson. Both were enlarged with later additions. While Jefferson is no longer extant, the Ravenna School building remains today, repurposed as apartments.

The second later pair, Alki School at 3010 59th Avenue Southwest (1913, demolished), and Lawton School at 4017 26th Avenue West (1913, demolished), were somewhat simpler in form and detailing, with a greater emphasis on horizontality. In these buildings, the simple hipped roof was unbroken by any gables. Windows remained distinguished by terracotta headers, although lacking the decorative panels between main and upper floor windows as at Ravenna and Jefferson.

Compared to Ravenna, Jefferson, Alki, and Lawton Schools, the c.1913-1915 Blair schools such as McGilvra represent a greatly simplified Beaux-Arts or American Renaissance Revival design. In McGilvra, the horizontal banding at the first floor level (present in the earlier school buildings) has been replaced with a simpler, single buff brick color at the first floor level. Terracotta or cast stone details at window headers and the cornice have been replaced by simple bands of buff-colored brickwork, and brackets at the cornice have been replaced with modillions.

“Intermediate” schools

These were another building type developed by Blair for area with slower-growing populations. He called them an “intermediate grade of school building” for neighborhoods where “the portable [school building] is not suitable, and yet the population is not sufficient for several years to warrant the erection of one of our standard nine-room fireproof buildings.”

These were small, one-story schools of four to six classrooms. Harrison/Martin Luther King and the North Queen Anne school were Georgian-style structures; the Fauntleroy school was somewhat Jacobean in style; and the Crown Hill school was clad in stucco.

“Border” schools

These were another building type developed by Blair, to be built along the “border” of the property where substantial additions were required to expand the wood-frame model school building already on the grounds. Such a location would maximize remaining open space for play area or future building programs. These were relatively long, narrow structures comprised of two stories with raised basement, with classrooms arranged along a single-loaded corridor, in the case of Allen, Seward, and Latona. Cooper and Madrona were constructed as double-loaded corridor versions. In many of these later examples of Blair-designed schools, exterior ornamentation was limited to somewhat stripped-down brick work due to wartime material restrictions and school budget concerns.

Naramore & Brady, architects of the 1940 north wing addition

Naramore & Brady, a partnership formed by Floyd A. Naramore and Clifton J. Brady, were the architects for the 1940 north wing classroom addition to the main school building.

Floyd Naramore was born in Warren, Illinois, in 1879. He studied engineering at the University of Wisconsin, worked for a time in Chicago, then received an architecture degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1907. He moved to Portland, Oregon, around 1909, where he worked as a cost estimator for a bridge company for several years. Around 1912, he was appointed the architect for the Portland School System, where his design of the Couch Elementary School was featured in a 1915 issue of *American Architect and Building News*, a national trade publication.

Impressed with his skill as a designer and administrator, the Seattle School District hired Naramore as chief architect in 1919, replacing Edgar Blair. At that time, Washington State had just passed a compulsory attendance law, so the school district required additional school buildings for an expected increase in students. Naramore served in this capacity over a decade, until 1932, during a period of sustained growth in the city. His first project for the school district was Highland Park Elementary School (1919-21).

Naramore’s approximately two-dozen designs for the district included Roosevelt (1922), Garfield (1923), and Cleveland (1927) High Schools, as well as Madison Junior High School (1929)—all designated Seattle landmarks; Edison Vocational School (1921), now part of today’s Seattle Central Community College; and additions to Franklin and Ballard (1925, demolished) High Schools. Over a dozen elementary schools were designed by Naramore, including John Hay Elementary (1922); Columbia (1922); Bryant (1926), a designated Seattle

landmark; and Bagley (1930). Perhaps not surprisingly, there are several instances of Naramore designing additions to Blair's earlier school buildings—for example, Cooper Elementary School, which features a Naramore 1929 wing attached to a Blair 1917 design. Cooper (now Youngstown Cultural Arts Center) is a designated Seattle landmark.

Almost uniformly, Naramore's school designs during this period were symmetrical, boxy, brick-clad structures with terracotta or cast stone details, prominent central entries, uniform windows in repetitive groups, and a strong overall horizontal emphasis. Buildings were generally set on level but terraced sites, and details were generally a modernized Georgian (although there are instances of his use of the Jacobean, Collegiate Gothic, and Mission styles), and focused around the main and secondary entries. Large structures were often massed near the street edge of a property, in order to create an impressive urban presence along the streetfront, but also to allow as much open space, for play area and future expansion area, as possible.

While still under the employ of the Seattle School District, Naramore formed a partnership from 1924 to 1929 with Alvin Menke, designing or acting as consultant for school buildings in Ellensburg, Aberdeen, Longview, and Bellingham. The partnership ended when work dried up during the early years of the Depression. The lack of funds in the Seattle School District also forced Naramore to resign his position with the School District in 1932.

Work during the late 1930s and early 1940s was scarce, but Naramore continued to find institutional work, the most prominent being the design of Bagley Hall at the University of Washington (1935-36), with associated architecture firms Grainger & Thomas and Bebb & Gould. During this period, Naramore was also elected a Fellow in the American Institute of Architects, and served as the Washington State AIA chapter president from 1939-40.

In 1939, Naramore formed a partnership with Clifton J. Brady.

Clifton Brady was born in Walker, Iowa, in 1895, and graduated from Iowa State College in 1917. Afterwards, he served with the Army in France in World War I. Brady moved to Seattle in 1927, where he worked as a draftsman for Naramore until 1933, and then was the state examiner in charge of the architectural program from 1933 to 1938, and then formed Naramore & Brady in 1939.

During the lean late Depression and prewar years, Naramore & Brady found work with federal and local authorities, including with the Seattle School District. Their classroom addition to the subject building would have been one of the earlier works of the partnership, with drawings dating from May 1940. Their design of T. T. Minor Elementary School (1940-41) was the first Modern style school in Seattle, a notable break from Naramore's previous Georgian style or other historicist detailing.

Schools by Naramore & Brady include the following:

- 1940 addition to McGilvra Elementary, the subject building of this report
- 1940 gymnasium-auditorium addition to Colman / Thurgood Marshall School
- 1941 T.T. Minor Elementary

- 1941 addition to West Seattle High School
- 1941 addition to Magnolia School
- 1941 addition to Lafayette Elementary
- 1944 addition to Van Asselt Elementary

During World War II, federal commissions for architectural design and construction were so substantial and of such scale that local architects had to form joint partnerships in order to accomplish the work on time. One such partnership that Naramore and Brady formed, which worked well and outlasted the wartime frenzy, was Naramore, Bain, Brady & Johansen, created in 1943 with William Bain and Perry Johansen (today known as NBBJ). Because the partners had all previously worked independently or in other firms, the new firm's portfolio from the outset included a wide range of building types, including corporate offices, healthcare, civic and institutional buildings, and educational facilities. At NBBJ, Naramore was named senior partner and had broad responsibilities for firm management but remained the primary lead for school design and contacts, while Brady was the executive in charge of the company's work on state institutions.

While NBBJ would be noted in later years for many building types and award-winning designs, from skyscrapers to sports stadiums around the world, some of their local and regional school projects during Naramore's and Brady's years at the firm include the following:

- 1949 McKinley Elementary School, Olympia (demolished)
- 1949 Roosevelt School, Olympia
- 1950-51 Columbia, Lewis & Clark, and Lincoln Schools, all in Wenatchee
- 1952 Clyde Hill School, Bellevue
- 1954 Addition to West Seattle High School
- 1956 Ashwood School, Bellevue
- 1957 Chief Sealth High School, and also 1969 addition
- 1961 Three Points Elementary, Medina
- 1963 Louisa Boren Junior High School

Brady died in 1963 at age 68, and Naramore died in 1970 at age 91, both in Seattle.

Huggard & Associates, architect of the 1972 gymnasium

Francis E. Huggard was born in 1907 in Sumner, Washington, and attended Seattle's Broadway High School. He attended the University of Washington for his professional degree in architecture. Early work included buildings at the Firlands Sanatorium, and an extensive remodeling program at the University of Washington as a WPA architect from about 1936 to 1940, although the work could not be specifically identified for this report.

Between 1940 and 1944 he worked as an architect in the office of Howard S. Wright Construction and the office of architect George Wellington Stoddard. From 1946 until 1954 he was in independent practice. In 1955 he and Stoddard formed the partnership of George W. Stoddard-Huggard & Associates. In 1960, Stoddard retired, and the firm continued under the name Stoddard & Huggard, under the direction of the latter. Stoddard died in 1967, and Huggard operated the firm for a time under the same name, but eventually changed it to

Huggard & Associates, until retiring in 1975. Huggard's office in these later years was located at 1012 Summit Avenue, on First Hill.

Early work found for this report, where Huggard was described as the designer, includes the following:

- University of Washington Husky Stadium (George Stoddard & Associates, 1950). In a contemporary news account, Huggard was specifically credited with the design of the “sharply pitched upper deck, the partially cantilevered steel roof, and the two silo-like ramps.”
- The Ward House at 10576 15th Avenue Northwest in Blue Ridge (Stoddard & Huggard, 1959), which was featured as the Seattle Times “Home of the Month” for November 1959. Huggard's design is a rather straightforward, simplified Colonial style two-story house, but was highlighted for its economical design and ease of maintenance.
- Renton Housing Authority Senior Housing project (Stoddard & Huggard, 1963). This 28-unit, one-story housing complex on Hillcrest Lane Northeast was the first low-income senior housing project in the Pacific Northwest, and was valued at \$660,000. The design includes four figure-8-shaped buildings in plan, with integral octagonal courtyards, and generous amounts of covered, exterior space under extended roofs. The project included numerous features designed for handicapped or wheelchair-bound residents.

Huggard's most publicized work may have been major additions to the King County Youth Services Center, which occupies an entire block at East Spruce Street and 12th Avenue near Seattle University. The multi-year project extended from about 1968 to 1971, and included a master plan and phased construction for a four-story office wing, gymnasium, kitchen/dining facilities, and two-story residential wings for dependent and delinquent children. The buildings are primarily precast concrete construction. Controversy over project funding and construction oversight problems extended into 1972.

In 1972, Huggard designed the McGilvra Elementary School Gymnasium, which has been described as “the most modern in the district at the time.”

Also in 1972, construction began on Huggard's addition to The Polyclinic, a medical office building located at 1200 Harvard Avenue. The two-story addition more than doubled the size of the original 1966 clinic, and construction was valued at \$500,000. The addition included office suites, a new laboratory, and x-ray department.

Huggard was relatively active in professional affairs—he was appointed by the mayor to serve on the Seattle Planning Commission from 1956 to 1962, replacing architect J. Lister Holmes. He was an active member of the American Society of Planning Officials, and served as First Vice President of the Washington State Chapter of the American Institute of Architects for a time.

Huggard died in 1976 in Seattle, at age 68.

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The features of the Landmark to be preserved include: the site; the exteriors of the 1913 building and 1940 addition; and the interior corridors, stairways, and classrooms.

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A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Karen Gordon', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Karen Gordon
City Historic Preservation Officer

Cc: Tingyu Wang, Seattle Public Schools
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