



The City of Seattle
Landmarks Preservation Board

700 Fifth Avenue • Suite 1700 • Seattle, Washington 98124 • (206) 684-0228

Landmark Nomination Application

Name: Lake City Professional Center **Year Built:** 1931

Historic Names: Lake City School

Street and Number: 2611 NE 125th Street, Seattle 98125

Assessor's File No. 282604-9043

Legal Description: See next page

Original Owner: Lake City School District #180

Original Use: Elementary School **Present Use:** Office

Present Owner: Seattle School District #1
Ron English, Deputy General Counsel
2445 3rd Avenue S.
Seattle WA 98124-1165

Lessee: Lake City Center Partnership
c/o JBL LLC
2025 1st Avenue #420
Seattle WA 98121

Architects Stimson and McDonald (1931)
Works Progress Administration (1939)
William Mallis (1945)
Wyatt Stapper Architects (1986-87)

Administered by
The Historic Preservation Program, Seattle Department of Neighborhoods

Legal Description: Part 1 of Seattle Short Subdivision #8603362 recorded as #8610271211. All that portion of the unplatted northeast quarter of Section 28, Township 26 North, Range 4 East, W.M., known as Tracts B, C & D as excepted from Homewood Park, according to the plat thereof recorded in volume 22 of Plats, page 73, records of King County, Washington, and of that portion of 27th Avenue NE vacated under King County Commissioners' record No. 40-192 adjoining said Tracts B and C, and of that portion of alley vacated under King County Commissioners' record No. 31-255 adjoining said Tracts C and D, which lies north of a line which begins at a point on the centerline of 26th Avenue NE lying S 2° 36' 59" west 342.00 feet from the platted centerline of NE 125th Street, said intersection being marked with a brass disc in a 3" pipe, and runs thence S 88° 25' 50" parallel with said centerline of NE 125th Street to its easterly terminus on the east line of said tract B; Except the east 60 feet of the north 120 feet of said tract B; and Except those portions thereof conveyed for NE 125th Street by deeds recorded under King County Auditor's File Nos. 3042097 and 6498542.

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OVERVIEW

The Lake City School was built in 1931 in what was then the semi-rural community of Lake City, in unincorporated King County north of Seattle. No building permit or original plans have been located; the building was outside the city limits at the time of its construction, and was constructed by a school district that no longer exists.

The two-story masonry building was a major feature of the community and the neighborhood's social center developed around it. The school was expanded twice, in 1939 and 1945. It was incorporated into the Shoreline School District in 1944 and into the Seattle School District in 1954. As more schools were built to accommodate the rapidly-increasing post-war population, Lake City's student enrollment dropped and the school was closed in 1981. In 1986 the school district entered into a long-term lease with Lake City Center Partnership, who converted the building into professional offices. At that time the exterior of the original classroom section was renovated, while the interior was gutted, the gymnasium wing was significantly altered and a new wing was added on the south end.

BUILDING DESCRIPTION

Setting

The former Lake City School is located near the heart of Lake City, on the south side of NE 125th Street, approximately three blocks west of Lake City Way NE (SR 522). The surrounding area is developed primarily with small-scale institutional and multifamily buildings as well as some older single-family homes and duplexes.

Directly across NE 125th Street is 27th Avenue NE, which dead-ends at the school. West of this street is Our Savior Lutheran Church, a sprawling complex with a large parking lot. Farther to the west and northwest are single-family homes and duplexes from the 1940s-1960s and small apartment buildings. Along NE 125th Street, to the east, are larger apartment and condominium buildings. Northeast of the school, at the corner of 28th Avenue NE, is the Lake City branch of the Seattle Public Library, a Modernist brick building (John Morse and Associates, 1965), with the community center and several parking lots behind it. To the east of this is the beginning of the business district, which is a strip about two blocks wide along Lake City Way NE.

South of the school is the Lake City Playground (2.6 acres), owned by the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation. This was originally the school playfield. Toward the south and southwest the surroundings are largely single-family homes and duplexes, with many of the early 1940s-60s houses sitting among tall evergreens.

Site

Lake City School sits on a 2.68 acre site, with parking lots (a total of 138 spaces) to the east and south (rear) of the building (see the site plan, Appendix A). The site is roughly rectangular, except for a cut-out parcel (60 by 120 feet deep) at the northeast corner, which is occupied by a small office building. At the front of the building are a parking lot (15 diagonal spaces), a narrow lawn and landscaping, including a hedge of trimmed hollies. The entry from the sidewalk is marked by four columns topped with globe fixtures and staggered pavers that recall the original semi-circular walkway visible in older photographs.

The entire site is well landscaped with lawns and a wide variety of trees, shrubs, groundcovers, vines and annuals. The front of the building has foundation plantings of rhododendrons, azaleas, dogwoods and lilacs. The majority of the parking is to the east and south of the building. The parking lot is landscaped with four grass-covered planting beds, each with two oak trees, with additional oak trees along the edges. At the rear (south) boundary, a tall laurel hedge separates the property from the Lake City Playground (once part of the site). A similar hedge with maple trees is at the west edge. At the east, a chain link fence and a row of large cedars (primarily) separates the parking lot from the apartment complex next door. The narrow northeast parking lot, between the school and the adjacent small office building, has a denser screen, with laurel, oaks and evergreens.

Exterior description

The 37,500 square foot building is of masonry construction with concrete, brick and timber frame elements. It has 7 sections, based on their history and current treatment (shown on the site plan, Appendix A):

- A. The original two-story classroom building (Stimson and McDonald, 1931);
- B. The original gymnasium wing to the south (Stimson and McDonald, 1931);
- C. A two-story addition at the west end (Works Progress Administration, 1939);
- D. A narrow two-story addition on the east end (William Mallis, 1945);
- E. A one-story addition on the east end (William Mallis, 1945);
- F. A one-story addition south of the gymnasium (1986); and,
- G. The Annex, a gabled addition at the southwest corner of the building (c. 1943 but largely rebuilt in 1986).

Section F replaced a group of portable classrooms and was built to connect the rebuilt Annex building to the rest of the complex.

The Classroom Building (Sections A, C, D)

The original building is a two-story building of masonry construction clad with multicolored bricks (predominantly dark red with ochre accents). Based on the 1937 Tax Assessor records, the original classroom section was generally rectangular in plan, measuring approximately 94 feet wide and 62 feet deep. Sections C and D, the

two-story additions to the main building, are not easily distinguishable from the original building

The main building has a hipped roof with the gymnasium wing set into it at the rear. A tall cupola seen in early photos is long gone, perhaps removed after the 1949 earthquake. The roofs are clad with asphalt shingles, with a built-up roof on the flat-roofed section. The center entry is striking, with a Georgian-style broken curved pediment with an urn, flanked by fluted pilasters. The entry is recessed about four feet, with a pair of eight-light wood doors with tall four-light fixed transom windows and four-light sidelights. In the entry is a plaque noting the building's construction date (1931), architects (Stimson and McDonald) and the school directors at the time.

Windows on the main façade are unusually large, most measuring approximately nine feet tall and four feet wide. Above the entry is a three-part window consisting of a ten-over-ten sash flanked by four-over-four windows. On each side of the entry each floor has a large bank of five ten-over-ten windows. At the ends are single six-over-six (on the upper story) and six-over-three windows. All the windows have brick sills and lintels of soldier bricks.

The west façade (added in 1939) is relatively featureless, with a tall round-arched window at the center and a large multipaned window on the ground floor. The Works Progress Administration plaque is to the left of the lower window. At the southwest corner, a chain link enclosure, screened with shrubs, contains HVAC equipment.

Windows on the south façade are similar to those on the front. The eastern section of the rear façade has two bays of eight-over-eight windows on the second story, one with four windows and one with three. The first story has a bay of five windows, a single window and a plain wooden door, added in 1945. The western section has similar windows, with three bays of five windows on the second story. The first story has two bays of five windows each and a center bay with four windows and a secondary entry. This entry, probably added in 1939, reflects the Georgian style of the main entry but with Moderne influences; it has a plain wood door and a stylized canopy with oversized corbels and fluted pilasters.

The Gymnasium/Auditorium Wing (Section B)

The gymnasium/auditorium wing (Section B) forms an ell behind the west end of the classroom building. It measures 42 feet wide and 77 feet long (north to south) and is set into the rear of the gabled roof of the main building. It originally was one story with a 20-foot ceiling, but a mezzanine and upper-level offices have been added. On the east and west facades two major entries have been added. These are Post-Modern reinterpretations of the Georgian entry on the main façade, with oversized pediments. Each entry has a pair of glazed wood doors topped by a tall round-arched multipaned window above an eight-light window. Other windows in the wing are newer one-over-one wood sash.

On the west side is a large U-shaped courtyard formed by this building, the west wing of the main building and the clapboard-clad Annex. The courtyard is extensively landscaped with trees, shrubs, groundcovers and annuals.

The 1945 Addition (Section E)

The one-story flat roofed 1945 addition is compatible with the 1931 building, with the same brick facing but less detail. Toward the east end of the main façade is a secondary entry with ornamentation that reflects that of the main entrance, but is smaller and simplified, with a broken pediment above a keystone and pilasters with simple capitals; the urn is missing. There is a concrete walkway and newer metal railing. It has a flush nine-light paneled door. East of this entry is one 8-over-8 window with a pair of similar windows to the west.

On the east façade the recessed center entry has a pair of original wood panel doors with four-light glazed upper sections. The entire entry is very simple, with a plain surround and a white painted concrete lintel. There is a single concrete step and a concrete walkway leading around to the front of the building. On each side of the entry are a small single pane window and a pair of 3-over-3 wood windows (40 inches wide by 60 inches high). This area has foundation plantings of rhododendrons and azaleas with dogwoods flanking the entry. The south side of the one-story addition has similar windows to those on the front, plus a shallow three-sided bay window where the kindergarten room was once located. There is a simple entry that provided direct access from the kindergarten to the covered play area that was originally at this corner.

South (Sections F, G)

At the southwest corner of the complex is a simple gabled building with clapboard cladding, known as the Annex. Its history is unclear but, based on photographic evidence, it appears to have been placed on the site during World War II as a classroom annex. It is of simple frame construction and may have been moved from another location; it had no foundation. It has been substantially rebuilt, with a concrete foundation and new wood windows and cladding. The entry, in the center of the west side, is also new, with a simple glazed door with a multipaned transom and sidelights, and concrete steps with a metal railing. On each side of the entry are two tall, narrow six-over-six wood windows. The north and south sides of the building each have a pair of similar windows; those on the south side were added in 1986.

To the east of this building is a new (1986) gable-roofed building that connects the Annex to the main building. This replaces an open garage area and a group of portables that were put in this location in the 1940s. It has clapboard cladding and one-over-one wood windows. At the east end is a tall recessed entry with an oversized fanlight. The west end is joined to the gabled Annex. The south façade has a center entry with a simple glazed door and newer wood windows. A wisteria-covered pergola extends the entire length of the south facade.

Interior Description

When the building was converted to office use in 1986, the interior was gutted and completely rebuilt in a new configuration that does not reflect the original school interior. No features or materials remain from the original interior.

The majority of the building (Sections A, C, D and E) is divided into individual office suites, as seen in a typical professional/medical office building. The main entry on the north opens to a large foyer with a glass wall and double doors leading into a center hallway with a staircase on the left and an elevator on the right. Past this is the atrium described below.

Section B, the original gymnasium, is now a two-story atrium that forms a central reception area with primary entrances added on the east and west sides. Large skylights provide light into the interior. Hallways extend to the north and south. A reception counter is at the southwest corner. An open staircase at the southeast corner provides access to a mezzanine leading to numerous enclosed offices. Throughout the interior, wall finishes are primarily painted drywall, with flooring of tile or carpet. Most spaces other than the atrium have 10-12 foot dropped ceilings with acoustical tile.

Building Alterations

As described above, the exterior of the original 1931 classroom building remains largely intact, but the interior was extensively altered in the 1986-87 conversion to office use. This list notes the most significant alterations.

Exterior:

- Windows on the main building were retained and repaired. New, but compatible, wood windows and doors were installed in the gymnasium wing.
- On the gymnasium wing, two major entrances were added, one on each side.
- At the south end of the gymnasium, a new wing was constructed to replace the portable classrooms and connect the main building with the Annex, which was substantially rebuilt.

Interior:

- The interior was gutted and new office spaces constructed.
- The gymnasium wing of the original building was remodeled into a large atrium that serves as a central entry/reception area.
- A mezzanine and upper-level offices were added in the gymnasium.
- Two new staircases were added, one in the front lobby and one in the new atrium.
- Skylights were added to illuminate the atrium interior.
- The electrical and plumbing systems were replaced and the original boiler heating system was replaced with a heat pump.
- An elevator was added near the front entry.

Site:

- The narrow front lawn with a semicircular walkway was replaced by a row of parking spaces, with new landscaping.
- Extensive and varied foundation plantings were added around the entire building, as well as extensive landscaping in the courtyards of the new entries in the south wing.
- The large bare playground/parking lot was landscaped with planting beds with grass and oak trees.
- Laurel hedges were planted along the south (rear) and west sides of the lot, separating the parking lot from the adjacent park and the street.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Neighborhood Context: The Development of Lake City

Lake City is broadly defined as the area from NE 85th Street to the city boundary at NE 145th Street, between I-5 and Lake Washington. This vicinity developed as a residential area primarily in the automobile era following World War II. Thus, its development pattern differs from the streetcar grid found in older Seattle neighborhoods. The Lake City School is located near the historical social and commercial hub of the community, NE 125th Street and Lake City Way NE.

At the beginning of the 20th century, when Seattle was a bustling city, North King County remained heavily forested and sparsely populated. Thornton Creek and its tributaries crossed the area, emptying into Lake Washington near Mathews Beach (NE 90th Place), north of Sand Point. The lakeshore and numerous wetlands were appealing to the native Lake People of the Duwamish tribe for their winter villages and sites for fishing, hunting and the gathering of roots and other foods. There was at least one longhouse at the mouth of the creek.¹

Homesteaders filed scattered claims in the 1860s-70s, but many settlers were interested primarily in logging, and the Puget Mill Company, the developer of Port Gamble and a predecessor of Pope and Talbot, acquired much of what became Lake City. The company logged the land over the subsequent decades, selling cleared property for agricultural uses and residential plats.²

Transportation

Early transportation in most of northern King County meant traveling by water or on horseback over rough trails. Richmond Beach, in northeast King County, was one of the first settlements (1889), as it was served by the Northern Pacific Railroad and Puget Sound steamers. On the east, Bothell was a significant port at the north end of Lake Washington, with steamboats going down the Snoqualmie River to the lake.

¹ Coll Thrush, *Native Seattle: Histories from the Crossing-Over Place*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007, p. 254.

² Barbara L. Drake Bender, *Growing up with Lake Forest Park: The Early Decades in "North Seattle,"* Volume II, Seattle: Shoreline Historical Museum, 1989, p. 13.

The opening of the Ballard locks in 1916 lowered the water level so that the river was no longer navigable. In 1888 the Seattle, Lake Shore and Eastern Railway was completed from Lake Union around the north end of Lake Washington and south to Issaquah. Its primary purpose was to carry logs and coal to Seattle for shipment. Passenger service was a secondary consideration and the line seems to have had relatively little influence on surrounding development. Its route along the lake is now the Burke-Gilman Trail, a major neighborhood amenity.

The first road north from Seattle was the Military-Telegraph Road, which had two branches through northern King County. One went directly north to what is now Mountlake Terrace in Snohomish County. The other went eastward around the north end of Lake Washington, past Bothell. This branch was completed through the future Lake City in 1879. It was scarcely a road, but rather a rough trail with telegraph lines strung from the trees.³

Because of the lack of rail service and its steep topography, Lake City developed primarily along what is now called Lake City Way, the primary north-south route. Bothell's state legislator, Gerhardt Ericksen, was a member of the "Good Roads" movement and succeeded, in 1903, in having legislation passed to promote road construction. He petitioned in 1905 to have the wagon road upgraded; this was soon accomplished and it was subsequently named the Ericksen Road. By 1909 it had been graded as far as Lake Forest Park. By 1913 it was paved from Seattle's Ravenna Park to Lake Forest Park with macadam, and north from Lake Forest Park to Bothell with brick. Bothell leaders began calling it "Bothell Boulevard" or "Bothell Road." In 1924 it was named Victory Way to commemorate World War I. Road construction opened up access to the area for the first time and encouraged residential development.⁴

Victory Way became a major thoroughfare during this era, being the major route to Everett and Snohomish County and carrying most of the traffic in northeast Seattle. It was known for its accident rate; as early as 1933 newspapers urged the installation of a stop sign at NE 125th Street.⁵ Finally, in 1928, it was paved with asphalt. Its name was changed back to Bothell Way and then to Lake City Way.⁶ Because of its importance to regional transportation, the road has long been a state highway, initially designated as Primary State Highway 2 (PSH 2) in 1951 and later as Secondary State Highway No. 1-J (1961). It is now SR 522.

Transportation and development progressed quite differently on the west side of northern King County. The primary impetus for development there was the interurban rail line, which ran until 1939 just west of Aurora Avenue N., more than a mile west

³ Bender 1989, p. 160.

⁴ Bender 1989, p. 13.

⁵ Park, p. 4.

⁶ David Wilma, "Seattle Neighborhoods: Lake City Thumbnail History," http://www.historylink.org/essays/output.cfm?file_id=3449, accessed 7/4/2008.

of Lake City. The line was completed from Ballard to Hall's Lake-Richmond Highlands in 1906 and on to Everett in 1910. In 1912 Aurora Avenue (then known as the Grand Trunk Highway) was completed from Seattle to the Snohomish County line, and extended to Everett in 1927. With this more direct route, traffic declined in Lake City and businesses suffered. In 1930 NE 130th Street was cut through to provide an east-west connection to Aurora Avenue. The opening of Northgate Shopping Center south of Lake City in 1950 again drew customers away, and in the 1960s the completion of I-5 as the state's primary north-south route reduced traffic even further.

Early Settlement and Platting

About 1900 D. H. and R. H. Lee purchased a large amount of logged-off land from Puget Mill Company. In 1906 they platted the entire area from today's 35th Avenue NE to Lake Washington and from NE 117th Street north to NE 160th Street, giving it the name Lake City from the Seattle, Lake Shore and Eastern's passenger station near Sand Point.⁷ Despite the platting, settlement was slow. The first established settlement was Lake Forest Park, platted and promoted by developers/planners in 1909-1910. It is located on the northwest shore of Lake Washington about 2.5 miles north of the future site of Lake City School.

Much of the heart of Lake City, near NE 125 Street (then called College Street) and Lake City Way, was platted about the same time. To the southeast of the future school site was University Lake Shore Park, platted by Clyde and Grace Chittenden in 1910. On the north was Kenwood (1913) and in 1918 the Dexter Horton Trust and Savings Bank platted the surrounding land to the east, west and south of the school site as Homewood Park. Cedar Park, farther to the east on Victory Way, was platted by the Puget Mill Company in 1923.

The Seattle city limit had been extended to 85th Street north of Green Lake in 1891, but all of northeast Seattle remained outside the city until 1910, when the boundary was extended to 65th Street, east of 20th Avenue NE. Victory Way, like many early automobile highways, developed with roadhouses and tourist cabins and motels. During Prohibition the route was a popular location for bootleggers, speakeasies and roadhouses, taking advantage of the county's laxer law enforcement. One of the best known roadhouses was the Jolly Roger (originally the China Castle), a designated Seattle landmark that burned down in 1989. Even the earliest businesses relied on customers arriving by automobile and many had their own parking lots (generally unpaved).

The Kroll map of 1930, about the time the Lake City School was constructed, shows scattered commercial development along the west side of Victory Way, with very little on the steeper east side. Most blocks in the platted area around the school had only two or three modest houses. To the south, development was more intense, with six to ten houses per block. However, land to the northeast was divided into larger acreages with few houses. The 1937 county tax assessor records show modest vernacular

⁷ David Wilma, "Seattle Neighborhoods: Lake City Thumbnail History," http://www.historylink.org/essays/output.cfm?file_id=3449, accessed 7/4/2008.

houses, mostly dating from the late 1920s; few were older than this. Post-and-pier foundations and board-and-batten siding were common.

Life in Early Lake City

Although most of Lake City was platted by the 1920s, actual development was scattered, and agriculture was a dominant use. Perhaps the major example was Ostrom Mushrooms, which had a cannery and a series of gabled growing sheds (each 50 feet wide and 124 feet long) on NE 125th Street almost across from the school site. It operated at this location from about 1930 until 1970; the family-owned company is now based in Olympia. Many residents had large gardens and sizeable chicken houses (20 by 50 feet, for example). Chicken feed and other agricultural needs were prominently advertised in the local paper, the *Victory Way Reporter*. The area also had six riding academies and 600 horses.⁸ Farther to the south were dairies, truck farms and greenhouses. Jackson Park Golf Course, on NE 130th Street, opened in 1930. Lake City experienced slow but steady growth during the 1920s and through the Depression, with residents attracted by the freedom to build houses more cheaply than in the city and by the large lots where they could raise vegetables and chickens to supplement their diets and incomes.

Although close to Seattle, Lake City functioned much like a small town, with numerous clubs and organizations bringing the scattered residents together through activities. Without a city government, residents joined together to provide community amenities. The Lake City Commercial Club (now the Lake City Chamber of Commerce) formed in 1933 to promote Victory Way businesses.

The community's major public institutions were the school and the library, and the history of the two is intertwined. In 1935 the Pacific Improvement Club established a free public lending library, which shared a space in the school with the local Works Progress Administration office. This helped to identify the school vicinity as the social hub of Lake City. Two years later the library moved to its own room in the school. Although King County voters approved formation of a library system in 1942, construction of branch libraries was deferred until after World War II. The tiny Lake City branch, still located in the school, became the second branch in the county system, with a librarian and additional volumes provided by the county. The branch became part of the Seattle Public Library in 1955. After further sojourns in temporary quarters, a new library finally opened in 1965, located across the street on the site of the original Lake City School at NE 125th Street and 30th Avenue NE. The building, designed by John Morse and Associates, was designated a city landmark in 2001.⁹

Another critical effort in the neighborhood's evolution was the acquisition of the nearby Lake City Community Center, built with funds raised by the community and staffed by volunteers. In 1941 the Lake City Lions Club began a long campaign to build a community center as a place for both recreation and governmental services. They teamed up with the Lake City Commercial Club to put on a summer festival (now known as Pioneer Days) as a fund raiser. By 1944 they purchased two acres

⁸ Wilma, "Lake City Thumbnail History"

⁹ David Wilma, "Lake City Branch, The Seattle Public Library."

near the old school for \$1,900 and rented a portable building to the Boys Club. They then raised money to buy the adjacent land, which they deeded to King County for a park. When the county deemed it too small for a park, the Lions held a salmon bake to raise funds for additional property. The county conveyed the land back to the club, which then began planning for a new building. The Lions finally achieved their goal in 1957 with the opening of a new community center just north of Lake City School at NE 125th Street and 28th Avenue NE.¹⁰

By this time, Lake City had been annexed into Seattle. The old Lake City School, adjacent to the new center, was purchased by the city in 1958 and its grounds used as a playground. In 1964 the Lions Club conveyed their property and recreation center to the city on the condition that the old school site be sold for library use and that the money be used to renovate the community center. The 1913 school building was demolished in 1965. In 1972 the old playground area (1.3 acres) was renamed Al Davis Park, for a prime mover behind development of the center.¹¹ Thus, the vicinity of NE 125th Street and 28th Avenue NE developed into a hub of community activities, with a school, library, community center and park, just west of the business district.

Growth increased dramatically during and after World War II. Although Lake City was not close to the major Duwamish defense industries, it was convenient to Sand Point Naval Air Station, and some housing for defense workers was built. Following the war families flocked to new houses in suburbs like Lake City. With their new automobiles they were no longer dependent on streetcars or buses. By 1949, Lake City had approximately 40-43,000 people. Development changed to accommodate these new families. In the late 1940s-early 1950s small multifamily development was the common pattern, with numerous ranch-style duplexes or three-or-four unit buildings, often of concrete block or clad with Roman brick. Some owners built small groups of several similar buildings; evidence of this development pattern is still apparent. By the late 1950s, however, larger multifamily buildings were seen in the school vicinity, close to Lake City Way.

Lake City's businesses had always accommodated the automobile, but in the 1950s auto dealerships became a major feature of the commercial strip. Seattle's auto dealerships initially located in the Pike/Pine corridor on Capitol Hill and, later, in the Denny Regrade. However, after World War II the general move to the suburbs and the need for larger showrooms and parking lots meant that most dealerships moved to the suburbs. The closest of these was Lake City, which had large areas of affordable land. Bill Pierre opened a dealership on Lake City Way in the 1950s and heavily promoted the community. The company has now expanded over several blocks.

In 1953 residents of north Seattle approved annexation by the City of Seattle. Voters were attracted by the fact that the city's larger tax basis would allow it to accommodate the area's rapid growth and needed infrastructure improvements with lower taxes and utility fees. In January 1954 the entire area up to 145th Street became

¹⁰ Clayton Park, "Pioneering Spirit led to building of Lake City Community Center," *Jet City Maven*, August 1997, pp. 8-9.

¹¹ Sherwood, "Lake City Recreation Center/Al Davis Park"

part of the city.¹² Dorm Braman (1901-1980), owner of McFarland's Lumber Yard on NE 125th Street and Lake City Way was elected to the city council and served as mayor from 1965-1969, some of the city's most turbulent years.¹³

By the 1970s the Lake City Way commercial district had declined due to continued competition from Northgate Shopping Center and the ease of reaching downtown and other shopping areas by freeway. Post-war development had brought larger stores with ever larger parking lots, leading to a loss of some of the early community atmosphere. In 1976-77 the community, led by the Lake City Chamber of Commerce and sponsored by the City of Seattle, undertook a planning process to update the commercial district. The heart of the business district, two blocks east of Lake City School, was renovated with new plantings, sidewalks and other urban design elements.¹⁴ Sidewalks were a particularly important addition, as county regulations had not required them; they were finally installed in front of the school in 1965.

Lake City has been designated an urban hub village in the city's comprehensive plan, and extensive multifamily development has occurred in recent years. A new master plan for the NE 125th Street/Lake City Way area (now known as the Lake City Civic Core) was completed in 2001. Improvements that have been completed are the expansion of the library, community center and Al Davis Park, more sidewalks and a new public plaza just west of Lake City Way. Plans are underway for a new fire station to replace the 1949 building near the community center.

Education in North King County

North King County's first school district was in its oldest community, Richmond Beach, which formed a district in 1892. As transportation options and population increased, three more districts were established: Ronald (1910), Lake Forest Park (1912) and Lake City (1912). By the 1940s the area between the Seattle city limits and Snohomish County had six small school districts: Richmond Beach (No. 86); Ronald (No. 179); Lake Forest Park (No. 181); Oak Lake (No. 51), Maple Leaf (No. 164) and Lake City (No. 180). The Lake City district encompassed approximately the area between 115th and 145th streets, from 15th Avenue NE to Lake Washington.¹⁵

Each district had only one school, and discussion of consolidating the districts began as early as 1920.¹⁶ However, it was not until 1944 that they were consolidated, forming Shoreline School District No. 412. The new district had a population of about 35,000 people spread over approximately thirty square miles. Its boundaries extended from Bothell west to Puget Sound and from the Seattle city limits to the Snohomish County line. Although the city limits is generally described as being at N.

¹² Myra Phelps, *Public Works in Seattle: A Narrative History of the Engineering Department 1875-1978*, Seattle: Kingsport Press, 1978, pp. 221-223.

¹³ George Foster, p. 3.

¹⁴ Makers

¹⁵ Bender, p. 271.

¹⁶ Roberta Hawkins (ed.). *From Shore to Shore and Line to Line: Shoreline Public Schools, 1944-2004*. Shoreline Historical Museum, 2007.

85th Street, the boundary was actually farther south in the northeastern part of the city, at NE 65th Street (east of 20th Avenue NE).

In 1946 the district had eight schools, of which Lake City was the largest:

Broadview	623 students	19 teachers
Haller Lake	399	12
Lake City	818	25
Lake Forest Park	621	21
Maple Leaf	698	22
Oak Lake	671	23
Richmond Beach	361	14
Ronald	375	13

The districts consolidated partially due to a state-wide effort led by the state Office of Public Instruction to encourage increased efficiency. However, another reason was the need for a high school, which was too expensive for any of the small districts to build alone.¹⁷ Lake City students attended Seattle high schools, primarily Roosevelt High School north of the University of Washington or Lincoln High School in Wallingford. Other Shoreline students attended Ballard or Bothell high schools. In 1949, the district opened its first junior high school, Jane Addams, to accommodate many seventh, eight and ninth graders. The first high school, Shoreline, was finally built in 1955, more than ten years after consolidation.

The Shoreline district's enrollment ballooned from 4,150 to 12,000 between 1945 and 1954. In the 1950s, the district added 19 new schools to its previous inventory of ten schools. However, the 1953 annexation of its most heavily populated neighborhoods to the City of Seattle profoundly affected the district. Enrollment fell almost 50 percent, to 6,500. Two junior high schools (Jane Addams and Woodrow Wilson) and eight elementary schools (Lake City, Maple Leaf, Haller Lake, Oak Lake, Broadview, Pinehurst, Olympic Hills, and Viewlands) were transferred to the Seattle School District. Teachers were transferred to the Seattle district and continued to teach as before. Seattle also acquired the outstanding debt on the purchase and construction of the schools, several of which were newly built.¹⁸

This acquisition of new schools and students, along with the post-war "baby boom," was responsible for the Seattle School District's enrollment increasing from about 50,000 in 1945 to almost 100,000 in the early 1960s. The annexed territory included large expanses of land available for new subdivisions, along with the ten schools. However, growth required more new schools as well. The 1949 earthquake also damaged several schools beyond repair. Between 1946 and 1958, Seattle voters approved six bond issues for school construction. From 1945 to 1965, two high schools, two junior high schools, 17 elementary schools and numerous additions were

¹⁷ Bender p. 234

¹⁸ Niles Thompson and Carolyn J. Marr, *Building for Learning: Seattle Public School Histories, 1862-2000*, Seattle School District No. 1, 2002, pp. xii-xiii.

built throughout the city. Despite the intensive construction program, portable classrooms were a typical feature; in 1958, 20 per cent of students were in portables.¹⁹

After the intensive construction program of the 1950s-60s, the school district faced new challenges in the 1970s-80s. Enrollment plunged dramatically, going from 93,000 in 1965 to 43,500 in 1984. Changing demographics, with smaller family sizes, and the migration of families to the suburbs were largely responsible. In 1980 the school board adopted a comprehensive school closure plan, which identified for closure two high schools, seven middle/junior high schools and 20 elementary schools. Many of those closed were in north Seattle, including Lake City School.²⁰

History of Lake City School

In 1912 the scattered residents of Lake City recognized the need for their own elementary school. Although the population was small, existing schools were a difficult journey for young children on rudimentary roads. J. E. Dudley, a Lake City resident, took leadership of the project, and collected signatures on a petition to the county superintendent of schools to form School District No. 180. The district purchased land at College Street (NE 125th Street) and 30th Avenue NE and began construction of a simple woodframe school. Classes began in September 1912, with 12 pupils and one teacher, Miss Linnia Kaufman.²¹ They initially met at 37th Avenue NE and (N)E 123rd Street, in a house donated for the purpose by H.L. Hilman, one of Lake City's primary property owners. The first months of the 1913 term were spent at Clyde Chittenden's camp store, with the new school building opening in January 1914. In 1919 two more classrooms were added, giving the school four classrooms, each with two grades and one teacher.²²

By 1926 the school had 80 students and by 1930 the community had clearly outgrown the four-room facility. The district purchased five acres of unplatted land across the street, on (N)E 125th Street and 28th Avenue NE. They hired the Seattle architectural firm of Stimson and McDonald to design a larger school, one that would accommodate all students and could be expanded to meet the future needs of the community. The new school opened in 1931. The brick-clad Georgian-style building was a significant advance over the original wood structure. The school was the most elegant and substantial building in Lake City and served a role in the community well beyond holding classes. Not only was the large gymnasium/auditorium frequently used for movies, lectures and other community events, but health care and library services were provided in the school.²³

Even during the Depression years, Lake City continued to grow, perhaps because its larger lots allowed people to build cheaply and raise vegetables and livestock. By 1936, 380 students filled the school. Photos show that the new school was clearly meant to be expanded, as originally each end of the building was clad with clapboard

¹⁹ Thompson and Marr, pp. xii-xiii.

²⁰ Thompson and Marr, p. xiv.

²¹ Seattle School District

²² Seattle School District

²³ Park, p. 4.

with second-story doorways accessed by narrow wood stairs. The first addition was on the west end, adding seven classrooms, a cafeteria, a nurse's room and a teacher's room.²⁴ This was built in 1938-39 by the Works Progress Administration, as attested to by a small bronze plaque near the northwest corner. The architect may well have been William Mallis, the designer of the later 1945 addition, as he is known to have been doing work with the WPA at this time.

The growth of Seattle's war industries attracted families from throughout the country, leading to housing shortages and overcrowded schools throughout the region, including Lake City. In 1945 a second addition was made at the east end of the building, designed by William Mallis. This consisted of a narrow two-story addition and a larger single-story extension. Included were two classrooms, a kindergarten room and play porch, boys' restrooms, a nurse's office and a conference room and small toilet room. It was in the same Georgian style, but with a flat roof and simpler details. When Lake City School was acquired by the Seattle School District in 1954, it had 16 classrooms and a combination gymnasium/auditorium, plus the temporary additions on the south.

Despite the expansion, suburban growth was so strong that primary grades were double-shifted (attending only a half day) and kindergarten pupils were triple-shifted. With the opening of the Shoreline District's first junior high school, Jane Addams, Lake City became a kindergarten through sixth-grade school. The opening of Pinehurst Elementary School in 1950 also brought some relief. However, Lake City's enrollment reached 1,144 pupils in the 1952-53 school year. Some classes met in the old school building across the street. Sometime during this period (or perhaps earlier, during the war) several portable classrooms, an open garage and a small gable-roofed structure (the Annex) were placed at the south end of the gymnasium wing.

Class sizes decreased somewhat with the rapid construction of other North End schools. Cedar Park Elementary School opened in 1956 as an annex to Lake City, serving grades 1-3. This rapid increase in the number of schools and changing demographics decreased class sizes, so that by 1961, Lake City had only about 550 students, fewer than half of its population nine years before. In 1974 the number of students had dropped to 370, about what it had been in 1936.²⁵

Lake City School was closed in 1981 as part of a city-wide school closure plan to bring the number of schools in line with the district's reduced enrollment. For a few years the building served as a community center, supplementing the facilities across the street. However, it was costly to operate. A community group, SPARCC (School Preservation and Recreation Community Center) worked to save the building, and a School Use Advisory Committee was formed. In an effort to preserve the building, a development plan was requested from Lorig Associates, who had successfully undertaken similar projects at Interlake School in Wallingford and Queen Anne High School (both of which are designated Seattle landmarks). In 1985 the southern half of the site was sold to the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation and is now a

²⁴ Works Progress Administration press release, 1939.

²⁵ Thompson and Marr, p. 165.

park, the Lake City Playground. In 1986-87, the school building was renovated and rebuilt, as described above, opening as a professional office building in 1987.

The Architects

At least three architectural firms have worked on Lake City School. The original architects were Stimson and McDonald, about which little is known. The 1945 addition and, possibly, the 1939 addition, was the work of William Mallis, a noted school architect. The 1986-87 remodel and additions were done by Wyatt Stapper Architects.

Stimson and McDonald

A plaque in the vestibule identifies the Seattle firm of Stimson and McDonald as the architects for the original 1931 building. Vas S. Stimson²⁶ (1888-?) practiced with Earl Morrison in Spokane from 1919 to 1926.²⁷ He came to Seattle at that time, establishing an office in 1927 in the Lumber Exchange Building, on the same floor as Andrew Willatsen. By 1929 the two had formed Willatsen Stimson and Company. Shortly afterwards, in 1931 he formed a partnership with Donald N. McDonald, which continued until 1940. During the war Stimson worked for the Federal Housing Administration, but he appears to have left Seattle by 1948, and his later life is not known.

Donald N. McDonald (1904-1964) worked as a draftsman for the Seattle Parks Department from 1927 to 1930, and formed a partnership with Stimson in 1931. When that arrangement ended in 1940, McDonald may have served in the armed forces. Following the war, in 1946, he worked briefly with Charles T. Miller and later practiced independently from 1947 until 1952, after which he worked briefly with Earl W. Morrison. In the 1950s he again opened his own office, Donald N. McDonald and Associates, which he maintained until his death in 1964.

Despite the fact that Stimson and McDonald were partners for about nine years, none of their other works have been identified.

Works Progress Administration

The Works Progress Administration, better known as the WPA, built the west addition to the classroom building in 1938-39. The designer is not known, but it may have been architect William Mallis (discussed below), who is known to have done a considerable amount of WPA work at this time. He was hired by the district to do the 1945 addition on the east end. Both of the two-story additions to the original building are virtually seamless in style and materials.

The WPA was created in 1935 by Executive Order of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and proved to be one of the most far-reaching and important of the numerous

²⁶ The plaque shows his first name as “Van” but other sources indicate that it was actually “Vas.”

²⁷ Jeffrey Ochsner, editor, *Shaping Seattle Architecture: A Guide to the Architects*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998.

programs of the New Deal. Its purpose was to help address the nationwide unemployment caused by the Great Depression by providing real jobs rather than relief. The WPA consolidated several short-lived earlier programs including the Civil Works Administration (CWA) and the Federal Emergency relief Administration (FERA). The WPA allocated 78 percent of its funds to public works, construction and conservation of natural resources. The remaining 22 percent supported a wide range of community services such as education, recreation, arts, historical surveys, public health and vocational training. In 1939, the WPA was reorganized and renamed the Work Projects Administration, and placed under the Federal Works Agency. Some of the most controversial programs, such as the Federal Theater Project, were ended. About this time, much of the program's emphasis gradually shifted to national defense preparation. The WPA ended in 1943, as the thriving war industries made it unnecessary. Despite the controversy and inefficiencies that surrounded the WPA throughout its existence, it directly involved more than 8 million workers and left a lasting legacy in every part of the country.²⁸

Here in King County the majority of WPA construction projects were roads, schools and infrastructure improvements in city and county parks. Other construction projects included a public cannery in Kirkland, Boeing Field improvements, the Seattle federal courthouse, several city halls, fish hatcheries and flood control projects. The program also completed numerous non-construction activities, such as historical records surveys, engineering surveys, community education, theater programs, public art and several publications.

Repairs and additions to schools were the most frequently requested WPA projects nationally. The program built 37 schools in Washington, including at least one in King County (Skykomish). Additions were less frequent, with an estimated 18 school additions built throughout the state.²⁹ School renovations or additions were made in Kirkland, Boulevard Park, Panther Lake, Meridian, Coalfield, Ravensdale, Bellevue, Foster, Highline, Mercer Island, Tukwila, Thorndyke, Duvall, Preston, Snoqualmie and Woodinville. It is not known how many of these buildings remain today.

William Mallis, Architect

The 1945 addition was designed by William Mallis (1894-1989), who was one of the most prolific local school designers of the era. Mallis was born on June 29, 1883 in Auchterarder, Scotland. He received his architectural training in nearby Perth, where he served a four-year apprenticeship with a firm specializing in the design of estates and conservatories. Mallis first came to the United States around the turn of the century but returned to Scotland for a period before permanently emigrating in 1912. He worked with the Kansas City, Missouri, firm of J. H. Felt & Company from 1912 to 1917. Following a brief period in Fallon, Nevada, he arrived in Seattle in 1918. He began work here as a draftsman/designer for the Pacific Coast Coal Company. In

²⁸ Charles Payton, "The WPA Legacy in King County," Historical Paper No. 14, 4Culture.org, October 2005.

²⁹ Sara Shippen and Natalie Shippen, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Edmonds High School, 1986.

1920 he established a practice with William Aitken in the Lyon Building, where he remained for the rest of his career. He worked with Aitken until about 1930, and was an independent practitioner until 1939, when Joseph H. DeHart joined the firm. DeHart became a partner in 1945.³⁰ The firm was later joined by Bruce Hopkins, to form the partnership of Mallis, DeHart, and Hopkins Architects. By the late 1960s, after Mallis retired, the firm gained two new partners, and was renamed DeHart, Lands & Hall Architects. In 1990 it evolved once again to Gregory & Chapel, a partnership that disbanded in 1996.

This school addition is a minor part of Mallis' vast body of school architecture. The firm's designs ranged from the Georgian/Colonial seen in the original Lake City School to International Style Modernist works. However, his most notable works use the Art Deco/Streamline Moderne design vocabulary. In 1936 he employed the Art Moderne style for the Skykomish School, a WPA project. This building is still in use and is an important part of the Skykomish National Historic District. Shortly thereafter, Mallis designed a major addition to Edmonds High School (1939, now the Edmonds Center for the Arts). This is also a notable example of Art Moderne design and is listed in the Washington Heritage Register.

Probably his best known work is Nathan Eckstein Middle School, a notable Modernistic building from 1950 that is now a designated Seattle landmark. Mallis or Mallis and DeHart designed a large number of schools for the Shoreline School District or its predecessors:

- Ronald School (1912)
- Richmond Beach School (1924)
- Maple Leaf School (1926)
- View Ridge Elementary School (1948)
- Jane Addams Junior High School (1949)
- Pinehurst Elementary school (1950)
- Woodrow Wilson Junior High School (1953)
- Shoreline High School (1955)
- Shorecrest High School (1961)

Other local works include:

- Lake Washington High School, Kirkland (1950)
- Kent Meridian High School (1951)
- Casper Sharples Junior High School (now Aki Kurose, 1952)
- David T. Denny Junior High School (1952)
- Nathan Hale High School (1963)

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³⁰ Kathryn H. Krafft, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Ronald School.

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