

North Queen Anne

At one time, the Ross land claim encompassed both sides of the creek that ran from Lake Union into Salmon Bay. John Ross built his family's house on the south side of the creek, north of today's Seattle Pacific University campus. The house was demolished during the construction of the Lake Washington Ship Canal.

In 1873, Mary Jane McMillan Ross opened the first school in the area on the second floor of their farmhouse. The Rosses moved in 1883 to the north side of the creek and reestablished their school there (see Ross School).

Among the subsequent homesteaders to the north side of Queen Anne were the Petersons, who came in 1880. The Petersons sent their children across the creek to the Ross School. For entertainment, the children went boating on a small lake near their property or played tennis on courts built by their father. In 1911, they sold the land with their tennis courts to the Seattle School District as a site for a future elementary school.

In 1912, the Seattle School Board authorized a new school building because Hay, Coe, and Day were overcrowded. What's more, students living on the north side of Queen Anne were unable to get to Ross and Day after a bridge was removed around 1913, and the waterway expanded for boat traffic. A temporary school called North Queen Anne was opened as an annex to Ross. First graders met in a room at a storefront laundry at the southeast corner of Florentia Street and Dexter Avenue.

The next fall North Queen Anne School moved to a portable further east on Florentia, near First Avenue W, and across the street from the permanent building that was under construction. The portable operated in split shifts, with 21 pupils in the 1st grade in the morning and 39 pupils in grades 2–3 in the afternoon.

The new building was ready just six weeks into the 1914–15 school year for the students who had been in the portable. Until it became an independent school in 1918, the principal of Ross School came to visit North Queen Anne School every two weeks.

By 1916–17, a new playfield was constructed to provide more space for outdoor activities. Room was created by removing a high bluff to the south of the building, the site of the small lake used by the Peterson children. The resulting dirt piles made at least one classroom so dark that reading class had to be held next to the windows.

Enrollment at North Queen Anne increased annually with the addition of a grade. That is, from 1914 to 1921 (with the exception of 1917–18), the oldest children simply moved up a grade and remained at the school until they graduated from 8th grade. When the full spectrum of grades 1–8 was included in 1920–21, over 300 students attended North Queen Anne. In 1922, a new addition of eight classrooms was built on the east side. Wood-framed playcourts with chain-link enclosures were added to the south facade of the building at this time.

For many years, a gravel pit was located immediately behind the school. Although it was fenced, there were steep cliffs just to the south of the school grounds and a 30-foot-deep pit pool. The gravel pit was closed in 1937 after the community took action to prevent an accident.

Name: **North Queen Anne School**
 Location: 2919 1st Avenue W
 Building: 4-room, 1-story brick
 Architect: Edgar Blair
 Site: 2.27 acres

1914: Opened as annex to Ross
 1918: Became independent school in fall
 1922: Addition (Floyd A. Naramore)
 1981: Closed in June
 1982: Leased to Northwest Center for the Retarded
 Present: Northwest Center Child Development Program



North Queen Anne, ca. 1916 SPSA 258-9

Eventually the pit was transformed into a playfield, known as Queen Anne Bowl.

One of the best-remembered teachers was Laura Deringer, who spent 36 of her 48 teaching years at North Queen Anne. Her former pupils recalled her as a tiny person who wore her hair in a tight bun and sported pince-nez glasses. It was said she always had complete control of the classroom.

At the beginning of World War II, the school served as community headquarters where citizens registered for ration books. A war bond and stamp drive held in spring 1943 raised enough money to purchase five jeeps for the army. In 1944, enrollment at the school reached 369, and the 8th grade transferred to the new Queen Anne Eighth Grade Center.

In October 1957, a fire destroyed the school auditorium. Also lost were the school's library books, which had been shelved at the rear of the auditorium. During summer 1958, renovation took place, and the former auditorium and lunchroom were combined into a single unit. A long stage was built, which served as the school library when not in use as a stage. In 1973, as a result of parent-staff interest, the library moved into expanded quarters. Additionally, classes for primary and intermediate visually-impaired students were placed at the school.

Throughout its history, North Queen Anne maintained a cooperative relationship with Seattle Pacific University, which is located just down the hill to the north. Curriculum materials, teacher training programs, and the use of the university's recreational facilities enhanced opportunities for North Queen Anne students.

In June 1981, North Queen Anne was closed in the district building consolidation and financial conservation plan. At the time, enrollment stood at 96, the lowest of the city's public elementary schools. By necessity, it had included a couple of "split" classes of two grades, and its nine kindergartners had attended John Hay School.





North Queen Anne, ca. 1922 SPSA 258-6

In 1982, the school was leased to the Northwest Center for the Retarded, which operates a Child Development Program there, integrating handicapped and normally developing children of preschool age.