

Crown Hill

Name: **Crown Hill School**
 Location: 9250 14th Avenue NW
 Building: 6-room, 1-story stucco
 Architect: Edgar Blair
 Site: 5 acres

1918: Named on November 7
 1919: Opened in spring as annex to Whittier
 1942: Became independent in September
 1949: Addition (Bebb & Jones)
 1979: Closed in June
 1981–82: Leased
 Present: Small Faces Child Development Center

Residents of the developing Crown Hill neighborhood north of Ballard found themselves in a predicament in 1908 when it came to sending their children to school. Because they lived north of the city limits at 85th Street, their “neighborhood” school was Oak Lake, a walk of several miles to the northeast. If they were willing to pay tuition, their children could walk two miles south to Whittier. When Greenwood School opened the following year, it offered them another choice within Seattle Public Schools, but still at a fee. Eventually Crown Hill parents convinced the school board to add a square mile of their neighborhood to the service area of Whittier, so these children could attend without tuition.

By fall 1916, Whittier was bursting at the seams. Even with nine portables, the school had to go onto a platoon system. This further fueled Crown Hill parents’ longing for their own school. In 1918, Albert Lundberg, on behalf of Crown Hill residents, persuaded the school board to purchase a site and build a school. The site chosen by the board was outside Seattle in unincorporated King County.

In designing the Crown Hill School, the architect decided on a smaller building because the population did not seem to warrant construction of the district’s standard nine-room structure. The design was simple and functional, but eventually its small size was a limitation.

In 1919, Crown Hill opened one spring afternoon with a march of children in grades 2–4 from Whittier School. Other students trans-



Crown Hill, ca. 1924 SPSA 217-2a



Crown Hill, ca. 1950 SPSA 217-190

ferred in from Greenwood School. The following September it was expanded to grades 1–6.

In 1925, a double portable was added as a lunchroom. Early fare consisted of soup and cocoa served by women from the PTA. Kindergarten was added in September 1936. Portables appeared by 1941–42 when one was moved in midyear from Ballard High School. Crown Hill did not become an independent school until 1942 when enrollment climbed to 309, well over the 280-student minimum.

An addition of seven classrooms, a kindergarten, a gymnasium, auditorium/lunchroom, and offices, in an L-shaped structure fronting on 14th Avenue NW and NW 95th Street, was opened in 1949 to handle the anticipated increase in post-war enrollment. However, enrollment was underestimated, and a dramatic increase from 397 in 1947–48 to 901 in 1957–58 required the use of 10 portables. A portable annex to Crown Hill called Northwest Elementary was opened in 1953–54 and developed into North Beach School. A central library was established in 1958–59 with over 5,000 books.

Over the next several years, enrollment at Crown Hill School started to decline. Three portables were removed by 1959–60. Enrollment was at 511 for 1966–67. In 1973, the school boundary line was adjusted nearer to the school, resulting in 45 students being transferred to North Beach School and only 300 students remaining at Crown Hill.

In 1979, as part of the district’s long-range plans for consolidation, Crown Hill was one of several schools slated for closure. A group of parents presented a plan to establish a K–8 facility at Whitman in order to keep their students together, but their proposal was narrowly voted down by the board, 4–3, and the students were transferred to North Beach, Viewlands and Greenwood.

Around 1981–82, the buildings were leased by the District to Northwest Youth Services. Between 1991 and 1997, the facility was leased by the Phinney Neighborhood Association (see Allen).

The current leasee is Small Faces Child Development Center. Surprisingly, one of their tenants is the Seattle School District. For the first time, the district is offering families a Home School Resource Center.



Crown Hill, 1960 SPSA 217-191

Housed in the south wing (or old building) of Crown Hill, the center offers home-schooled students (there were 375 in Seattle during 1997–98) and their families academic resources. It is one of only 25 such centers in the state. The program serves K–12 and, as of November 1998, was serving 150 students. The center houses 22 computers wired to the Internet, science classes, and music and art appreciation classes.