

Ravenna

Name: **Ravenna School**
 Location: NE 63rd Street
 & 22nd Avenue NE
 Building: 1-room portable

mid-1890s: Opened
 n.a.: Second portable added
 1907-09: Operated as annex
 to Fairview
 1909: Closed

From the late 1870s through the 1880s, children living in the area north and east of Green Lake went to Weedin School. Eventually a four-room school was built at the site of the present Green Lake School and Ravenna-area children walked to school there through the woods on an old country road where NE 65th Street is now. Only one house stood on this road between the streets now known as 20th Avenue NE and Roosevelt Way.

An early pioneer named W.W. Beck owned a large tract of land that included what is now Ravenna Park. Beck fenced the park and charged admission to families who wished to come for picnics. The park, named by Beck for a favorite location of his in Europe, was famous for its gigantic trees of spruce, fir, cedar, and hemlock. Eventually he sold the ravine to the city for a public park.

In the mid-1890s, a one-room portable was built near what is now NE 63rd Street and 22 Avenue NE, and the school took its name from the nearby park. Later another portable was added and, by 1908, nearly 50 children studied there under two young teachers. Beginning in 1907 Ravenna School operated as an annex to Fairview.

The school property was very small and poorly drained. In 1909, a larger four-acre tract was purchased at NE 68th Street and 22nd Avenue NE, some five blocks to the north, and two portables were erected there to serve as Fairview's annex.

Settlement of the area increased rapidly and a permanent building was constructed on the site, even though it was not within the city limits until 1923. The new building opened in fall 1911 as an independent school.

In 1923, with enrollment approaching 500 students, a south-wing addition of 11 classrooms and an auditorium was completed. The playfield was also enlarged through the purchase of two acres to the west.

Name: **Ravenna School**
 Location: 6545 Ravenna Avenue NE
 Building: 9-room brick and concrete
 Architect: Edgar Blair
 Site: 2.07 acres

1911: Opened
 1923: Addition (n.a.); site expanded
 to 3.24 acres
 1950: Site expanded to 4.5 acres
 1973-74: Addition (n.a.)
 1981: Closed in June
 1984: Sold to City of Seattle
 Present: Site of Ravenna School
 Apartments, senior center
 and parks department gym



Ravenna, ca. 1919 SPSA 265-44



Ravenna, 1960 SPSA 265-112

The playfield gained even more space in 1950 with additional land to the south. That year, the school reached its peak enrollment of 768 students.

The opening of Eckstein Junior High School in 1950 meant removal of grades 7 and 8, which left the building filled but eliminated several portables. By 1961, Ravenna employed a total of 24 teachers, including one for reading-library, and the student population continued to grow. Three portables were used for classrooms and a double portable for a gym.

During the 1973–74 school year, Ravenna’s students and teachers were assigned to neighboring schools while the building was remodeled. At the south side of the school, a gym was constructed as a separate building. In the main building, the library was remodeled and in the 1921 addition a kindergarten was added to the lower level. Reopening in fall 1974, the newly remodeled Ravenna became an “open concept” school with several of its permanent walls removed to accommodate this format of instruction.

In 1978–79, Ravenna participated in the district’s desegregation program by forming a triad with Green Lake and Colman, with Ravenna housing grades K, 3–5. In June 1981, Ravenna closed because of declining enrollment and shrinking district financial resources. At the time of its closure, the school’s student population was 205.

The building was sold to the city and since 1986 has housed the Ravenna School Apartments for seniors on its upper floors, along with a senior center and community center on its lower level. Once sold to the city, the structure was eligible for federal funds, which were used to construct a new Seattle Parks Department gymnasium and a senior center.



Ravenna, ca. 1960 SPSA 265-114