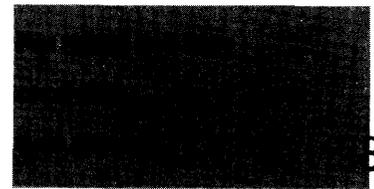


**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



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See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*  
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

**1. Name**

historic

Garfield School (Old)

and/or common

**2. Location**

street & number 528 Cottage Street NE

not for publication

city, town Salem

vicinity of

congressional district First 2

state Oregon

code

county

41 Marion

code 047

**3. Classification**

**Category**

- district
- building(s)
- structure
- site
- object

**Ownership**

- public
  - private
  - both
- Public Acquisition**
- in process
  - being considered

**Status**

- occupied
  - unoccupied
  - work in progress
- Accessible**
- yes: restricted
  - yes: unrestricted
  - no

**Present Use**

- agriculture
- commercial
- educational
- entertainment
- government
- industrial
- military
- museum
- park
- private residence
- religious
- scientific
- transportation
- other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Old Garfield School Building, Inc. (See continuation sheet for individual partners)

street & number PO Box 2099

city, town Salem

vicinity of

state Oregon 97308

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Marion County Clerk (Recorder)

street & number Marion County Courthouse

city, town Salem

state Oregon 97301

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title \_\_\_\_\_ has this property been determined eligible?  yes  no

date \_\_\_\_\_ federal  state  county  local

depository for survey records \_\_\_\_\_

city, town \_\_\_\_\_

state \_\_\_\_\_

## 7. Description

|   |                                       |   |   |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Condition</b>                              |                                       | <b>Check one</b>                            | <b>Check one</b>                                  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site |
| <input type="checkbox"/> good                 | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered | <input type="checkbox"/> moved                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> fair                 | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed    |   | date _____  |

### Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

Garfield School (1909), at the NE Corner of Cottage and Marion Streets in Salem, is a 3½ story building with buff-colored face brick and a high, cement-finished ground story. It is oriented to the west, fronting Cottage Street. H-shaped in plan, its longitudinal volumes have hipped roofs with wide, overhanging eaves carried on brackets. Broad, hip-roofed dormers light the attic story on north and south sides and above the central section of the west elevation. Facade organization is formal with trabeated fenestration which, on the facade, is arranged in four bays in either end section and three bays in the third story of the center section. Frameless, double-hung windows with one over one lights have toplights or transoms with many small panes and a continuous sill under each grouping. Smaller windows lighting classrooms in the side elevations have no toplight, but many small panes in the upper sash. The easterly two bays of either side elevation were blind originally, as they are now. A belt cornice tops the stuccoed ground story, and the entablature consists of a corbelled architrave, unadorned frieze, and a denticulated cornice under the eaves. The building's corners are articulated with brick quoins, as are those of a central, two-story, pedimented portico. The ground story of the porch contains a recessed entrance, and the upper story contains the former Principal's office lighted by five narrow, mullioned windows. The title of the school is carried in the low pediment of the central portico. A porch of generally the same design centered in the rear face supported fire escape stairs originally. Although the vocabulary of design is mixed, stylistically, the overall effect of the building relates to the phenomenon of the American Renaissance in which monumental architecture in the Renaissance spirit was echoed by public buildings of smaller scale in cities and towns across the country in the early years of the 20th century.

Interior spaces were arranged around the central stairhall and an oblong cross hall running north to south. The typical floor plan contained four major classrooms at the corners with small rooms in between and a large room at the center of the rear wall.

Of the adaptive-use renovation work carried out in 1974 and 1979, the minor share is evident on the exterior. A stair and service tower was added atop the back porch and was given a cement finish to match ground story treatment and, on its east face, six inset panels recall the blind brick windows of the side elevations. In an effort to make leaseable space of the attic story, additional natural lighting was introduced by small, unobstrusive triangular skylights made flush with east and west roof slopes, and the eaves were pierced to create attic windows without interrupting either cornice detail or bracket spacing. The roof was resurfaced with asphalt shingles, and flashing, gutters and downspouts were replaced as necessary. Face brick was repainted the original color, mortar was repainted as necessary, and stucco finish was repaired and repainted.

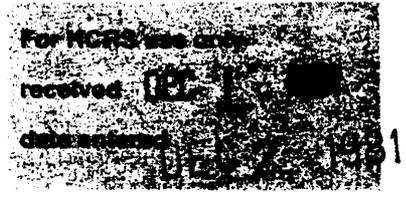
The front stairs of the interior were redesigned, and an elevator added as required by code. Leasees subdivided space in the former central hallways to meet their requirements, but original partitioning and door frames are intact. Plaster was removed from outside walls, which were then sandblasted to expose the brickwork. Ceilings were lowered to the transom bar line to conceal mechanical services. Two octagonal conference rooms were developed in the attic spaces of either hip-roofed volume. The large rooms at the center of the rear wall were redesigned to provide a back stairway, mechanical services and restrooms facilities on each floor.

The former playground area was curbed and surfaced for parking and edged with low berms, ground level shrubs and bark dust. Existing trees were preserved.

The immediate neighborhood of the former school building, at the northeastern edge of the central business district, is still predominantly residential, with state office development spreading out from the Capitol Mall on the east. The recent adaptation of Garfield School for office space meets a high demand while at the same time preserving a core-area landmark whose tree-shaded setting and moderate scale are integral features of the neighborhood.

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Garfield School (Old), Salem, Marion County, Oregon

Continuation sheet

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General partners in Old Garfield School Building, Inc. are as follows:

Forest Products Properties  
Attention: John Beardsley  
P.O. Box 550  
Corvallis, OR 97330

Hugh Richard White  
146 NW 28th Street  
Corvallis, OR 97330

Bruce E. Douglas  
340 Superior Street So.  
Salem, OR 97302

Michael M. Truax  
3315 Elderberry Drive So.  
Salem, OR 97302

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Forest Products Properties \*  
PO Box 550  
Corvallis, OR 97330

Hugh Richard White  
146 NW 28th Street  
Corvallis, OR 97330

Bruce E. Douglas  
340 Superior Street South  
Salem, OR 97302

Michael M. Truax  
3315 Elderberry Drive South  
Salem, OR 97302

\*Note: John Beardsley, representing Forest Products Properties, has power to sign for Old Garfield School Building, a general partnership.

# 8. Significance

| Period                                    | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below    |   |   |  |  |  |
|---|--|---|---|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric      | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric  | <input type="checkbox"/> community planning     | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> religion        |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499        | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic     | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation           | <input type="checkbox"/> law                    | <input type="checkbox"/> science         |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599        | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> economics              | <input type="checkbox"/> literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture       |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> education   | <input type="checkbox"/> military               | <input type="checkbox"/> social/         |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799        | <input type="checkbox"/> art                     | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian    |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899        | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy             | <input type="checkbox"/> theater         |  |  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> communications          | <input type="checkbox"/> industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government    | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation  |  |  |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> invention              |   | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |  |  |

**Specific dates** 1909      **Builder/Architect** Fred A. Legg, Architect  
George C. Mauer, Contractor

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

Garfield School, built in 1909 from plans drawn by local architect Fred A. Legg, is significant as the first brick public elementary school in Salem and as the last elementary school remaining in the downtown core. It was built from a somewhat standardized school design of the period in the Renaissance vein, having an H-shaped plan with hip-roofed volumes and dormers and bracketed overhanging eaves, a central portico, and formal facade organization accented by brick quoins. The school was closed in 1973. In 1974 it was acquired by local businessmen under the title Old Garfield School Building, and was renovated for office use. It possesses the distinctive characteristics of typical early 20th century public school buildings in the tradition of the American Renaissance. It possesses integrity of location, design and setting and sufficient integrity of materials and workmanship. Although the interior is no longer arranged in characteristic fashion with classrooms radiating from a central hallway, the exterior is intact, and because it is situated slightly more than a full quarter block shaded by mature trees, it retains an unmistakable public school appearance, or "feeling" and, thereby, retains its association with 64 years of public education history in the capital city.

When Garfield School was built in 1909, the city's fast-growing population numbered 17,000. Up to that time, Salem had the following grade schools, all wooden and all long-gone: East, at 12th and Center, built in 1885, used for grades 1-9 before Salem had a high school; North, built in 1890 for grades 1-7, later called Grant School, 725 Market Street; Park, built in 1891 in the Yew Park Area, 12th and Mission, for grades 1-6; and South, built in 1891 for grades 1-7, at Liberty and Myers, later called Lincoln. Salem High School had been built of brick in 1905 at Church and Marion Streets, and when Garfield School was completed the Salem School Board was able to tear down the little wood frame Central Elementary School (1867) which occupied the same block with the new high school.

Garfield's construction reflected a fear of fire in the old wooden structures. Voters on March 8, 1909, approved a \$20,000 bond issue for Garfield, only four days after the Oregon Statesman reported that a fire had threatened the 550 pupils of East School but had been extinguished. Two years earlier the School Board has been warned of lack of fire protection in all its crowded schools.

In 1908, the board purchased the Garfield site for \$4,750. The general contractor, George C. Mauer, completed the eight-room building on October 7, 1909. He had been the contractor also for the Salem High School in 1905.

On March 20, 1909, the Salem School Board had accepted the design of Fred A. Legg, architect for Garfield School. He has to receive 5% of the construction costs, estimated to be \$22,899. Legg (1869-1941) was born in Portland, Oregon of a pioneer family, attended Willamette University, and studied in Philadelphia. He began his architectural career in the office of Walter D. Pugh, Salem, in 1902, and established his own offices in Salem and Portland in 1906. The Portland office was discontinued in 1916 and reopened in 1922 with his son, Kenneth Legge, who changed the spelling of the family name, in charge. He designed the R. P. Boise Building in Salem in 1913, also nominated for the National Register, the Murphey Block in Salem and the Ainsowrith Building in Portland. There are seventeen sets of his plans in the Oregon State Archives for buildings at the State School for the Deaf, Fairview Home for the



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Mentally Retarded, the State Fair, etc. At the time of his death, the newspaper spelled the name Legge, as did his son.

The Garfield School design was sufficiently pleasing to the Salem School Board that Legg became architect for the next three two-story, fire-resistant schools built by the district: Englewood, opened in October, 1910, and Highland and Richmond, both opened September, 1912. They provided for the students to the North and East of the city center. In 1916, the next school, McKinley, to the south, was designed by George M. Post. Later schools designed by Legg included the High School in Camas, Washington. Garfield is significant as the first example of his school design in Salem, as well as being the first elementary school in the city to be of fire-resistant construction.

The first principal of the solidly built Garfield Elementary School was Margaret J. Cosper, who was to be an equally solid figure in Salem's educational affairs for 52 years following her graduation from Willamette University. She had been teaching in the Little Central School and was a natural choice for the \$100-a-month principalship. A disciplinarian, Miss Cosper promoted no one who didn't know the "Three Rs," and she played martial music on a Victrola as her pupils marched out at noon and at the day's end. She also placed photographs of the world's great art works in the rooms and put three pieces of marble statuary from Italy on the stair landing. The statuary was placed in the Salem City Library after Garfield's closure in 1973. In 1915, Salem established Junior High Schools, using old wooden structures for that purpose. At that time, Margaret Cosper, Principal and teacher at Garfield, became supervisor for the first six grades throughout the district, working out of her school. Miss Cosper retired in 1935, after 38 years at Garfield, and died in California in 1941. Still living is Greta Phillips Hiatt Coomler, West Salem, who taught at Garfield from 1909 to 1947.

Garfield lay empty for a year after its closure until a group of local businessmen purchased it under the name Old Garfield School Building, Inc. It is now the home of three legal firms, a realty company and insurance firm, and state offices. Ownership changed further in 1980, with the new partners carrying out the intent of the original partnership. Forest Products Properties of Corvallis, a partnership of six, owns 50 percent, and the remainder interest is divided among three individuals.

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Capital Journal, May 2, 1973; March 16, 1974.

Interviews: former teacher, Greta Coomler, and former pupil in the opening year, 1909,  
Dr. Wolcott Buren, August, 1980.

Constance Weinman: "A History of the Salem Public Schools, 1893-1916," August, 1932.