

Emerson

Name:	Emerson Elementary School	Enrollment:	295
Address:	9709 60th Avenue S	Nickname:	Eagles
Configuration:	K-5	Colors:	Blue and white

The Rainier Beach School, in Columbia School District No. 18, opened with two classrooms in the Rainier Valley in 1903. After becoming a Seattle Public School, it held grades 1–4 in 1907–08. The following school year, two additional classrooms were added to accommodate grades 1–7. The area’s 8th graders were sent to Brighton. However, the structure was so full that the board authorized the “renting of a portable church building at Rainier Beach . . . should an additional room become necessary.”

That same school year, the older wooden building was moved due west and a new brick building was erected on the original site, while school continued in the older classrooms. The new structure represented in the Jacobean style and was nearly identical to Greenwood and Hawthorne. With the new building, 8th graders were added to the student body. The school was renamed to honor Ralph Waldo Emerson, the 19th century American poet, essayist, and philosopher.

When Charles Gray became principal in 1911–12, he instituted a commonwealth student government. It consisted of a council, with a president and vice president, and a student court. The president had a cabinet, and law enforcement agents, consisting of a chief marshal and two assistant marshals, served the school. The constitution embodied provisions for referendum, initiative, and recall. Members of the council observed the Seattle City Council meetings.

Parents established a kindergarten at Emerson’s old building in 1910. It was integrated into the public school in 1914.

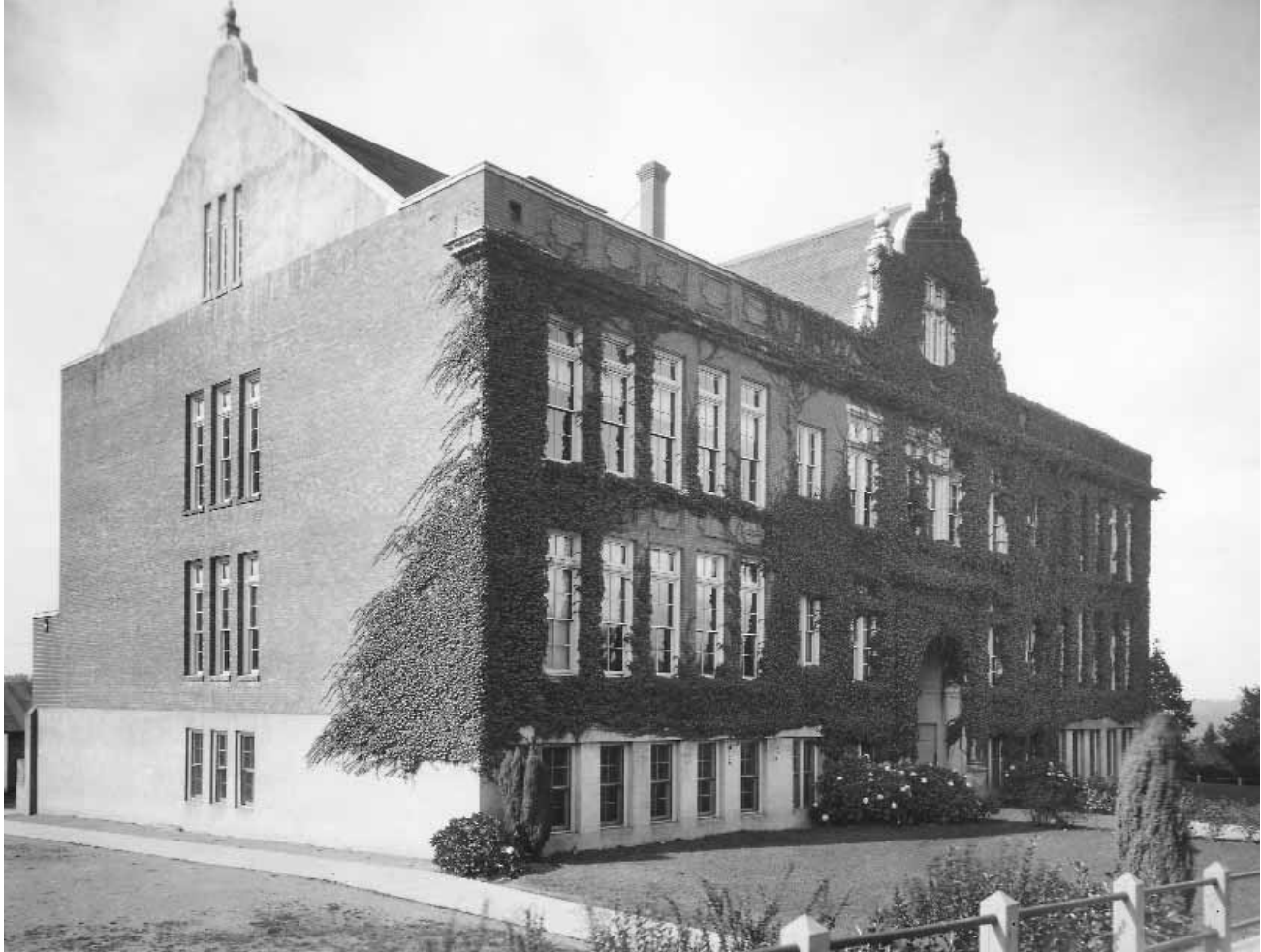
In the late 1920s, not only was the annex in use for classes, but there were also five portables on the grounds. Overcrowding led to the addition of a new wing of 10 classrooms on the south side of the building in 1930. Enrollment declined, however, during the 1930s, and there were many empty rooms at Emerson before World War II. By 1947, however, enrollment rose to 539.

The 8th grade left in 1949 to attend George Washington Junior High. In 1952, the 7th grade moved to Sharples. In 1957, enrollment passed the 900 mark. The building was remodeled in 1969, and a team teaching center was established in the 1930 addition. In the early 1970s, Emerson moved into individualized instruction with reading as its first priority. The most ambitious endeavor was a diversified, individually-prescribed language arts program. In 1973–74, the 5th and 6th grade were moved to the new South Shore Middle School, leaving Emerson as a K–4 school. In 1978–79, it shifted to a K–5 configuration. During 1982–89, it operated as a K–6 school. It returned to K–5 by 1993–94. Victor Dickinson retired in June 1975 after serving as Emerson’s principal for 30 years.

A 5.53-acre playfield, named Hutchinson Park after baseball great Fred Hutchinson who attended Emerson, is located to the north of the school. Because the school is on a hill and because of its height com-

Name:	Rainier Beach School
Location:	Pilgrim & 60th Avenue S
Building:	2-room wood
Architect:	n.a.
Site:	1.6 acres

1903:	Opened by Columbia School District
1907:	Annexed into Seattle School District
1907–08:	Operated as annex to Brighton
1908–09:	Operated as annex to Dunlap
1909:	Moved to side of site
1910:	Used for kindergarten by parents
1925–30:	Used as K, 3 annex
1930:	Closed; demolished



Emerson, ca. 1920 SPSA 221.1

Name: **Emerson School**
 Location: 9709 60th Avenue S
 Building: 9-room brick
 Architect: James Stephen
 Site: 1.84 acres

1909: Named on April 7; opened as independent school
 1930: Addition (Floyd A. Naramore)
 1969: Remodeled
 1998: Exteriors designated city landmark

pared to smaller buildings surrounding it, Emerson is a prominent landmark in the neighborhood.

Beginning in the summer of 2000, a major renovation project was launched at Emerson. The historic 1909 building will be reconstructed and modernized. The 1930 addition will be demolished and replaced



Emerson, 1963 SPSA 221.4

with a new two-story classroom wing on the south and a one-story multipurpose room and gym (all designed by DLR Group) to the west. Students will be housed at South Shore during the construction. Emerson will reopen in September 2001.