

Ballard

Name:	Ballard High School	Enrollment:	1,333
Address:	1418 NW 65th Street	Nickname:	Beavers
Configuration:	9–12	Colors:	Red and black
Newspaper:	<i>The Talisman</i>	Yearbook:	<i>The Shingle</i>



Ballard, 2000 ©Mary Randlett SPSA 011-61

The community of Ballard grew out of a few scattered homesteads built on thickly forested slopes rising from the tidewaters of Salmon Bay. The fishing and boatbuilding industries that developed along Ballard's shorelines attracted immigrants from Scandinavia. When Ballard was incorporated in 1890, its sawmills were producing huge quantities of lumber and other wood products, earning it the nickname "Shingle Town USA."

Two schools served local children: the small Broadway School (see Adams) and Central School. Central School was Ballard's first two-story building. It was built after the first school in central Ballard, a single-room log cabin owned by a Mr. Brygger, burned down in 1889.

As in other communities with large numbers of immigrants, Ballard's schools played a major role in teaching both adults and children how to become Americans. While the young people went to school during the day, adults attended English and citizenship classes at night. In 1901, Ballard School District No. 50 changed from a grade 1–10 configuration at Central into two programs: Central School for grades



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Central School in Ballard, 1905, MOHAI 83.10.9853



Irving, ca. 1940 SPSA 099-1

Name: **Central School**
 Location: Tallman & Barnes (5308 Tallman Avenue)
 Building: 12-room wood
 Architect: John Parkinson
 Site: 1.03 acres

1891: Opened by Ballard School District
 1901: Ballard High School program added
 1907: Annexed into Seattle School District; called *Central School Ballard*
 1909: Renamed *Ballard High School* on September 7
 1916: High school moved; operated as elementary school named *Washington Irving School*
 1940: Leased to Seattle Parks Department in May; closed in June and building demolished
 1950: Site returned to school district by Seattle Parks Department
 1951: Sold to Ballard Community Hospital in February
 Present: Site of Swedish Medical Center-Ballard Campus

1–8 and Ballard High School for grades 9–12. Older Ballard district students no longer had to pay tuition and streetcar fare to attend Seattle High School downtown.

In 1907, when Ballard citizens voted to become part of the City of Seattle, the population was still growing and many new schools were being planned or already under construction. There was some concern that the Seattle School District would close the high school at Central and transfer its students to Lincoln. These fears were allayed when it was decided that Central School would be renamed Ballard High School and would remain open as a dedicated high school until a new building was constructed.

The site for a new high school, acquired in 1911, was formerly the Hamblet family homestead. The Annual Report of the Seattle School Board stated: “Of the necessity for [a new high school] and the patience of the people waiting for it, there can be no question. The old building, long in use, is inadequate and unfit for further use as a high school.”

The architect, Edgar Blair, designed a rectangular building in the American Renaissance style with simple, direct features. The exterior was of dark red brick with terra cotta trim and copper sheet panels. Four pairs of ornamental iron gates framed the doorways.

The new Ballard High School opened in early 1916 with about 650 students coming from the old Central School as well as transfers from overcrowded Lincoln. Enrollment increased rapidly and exceeded the building’s capacity of 1,000 by the early 1920s. In 1925, a northwest wing consisting of nine classrooms and laboratories was built, replacing 11 portables that had been installed on the grounds. The new wing included a botany laboratory and greenhouse.

Many student clubs and activities began during the first decade. When the choir director asked, in 1918, for interested students, nearly a half of the student body turned out. The school newspaper, *The Ballard Journalist*, began in January 1918. Members of the Quill Club, formed in 1919, wrote and studied plays, short stories, and poems. Other organizations included Spanish Club, Latin Club, Press Club, and Debate. Ballard had the city’s first chapter of the Honor Society beginning in 1921.

A strong tradition of athletics that began at the old Central School continued and, in 1921, the Ballard football team went undefeated and won its first championship, its record blemished by only one tie against Broadway. The original nickname for the team, the Shingle Weavers, was a reflection of the community’s industrial roots.

In 1938, Ballard’s enrollment once again exceeded the building’s capacity with almost 2,000 students in grades 9–12. Portables again reappeared on the site.

The school board addressed the overcrowding in two ways: ninth graders left to attend either Monroe or Hamilton Junior High Schools in autumn 1942; and a study hall and classroom building were added in 1941 at the northeast corner of the original building, eliminating the need for nine portables. Beginning in 1951, some 9th graders returned to Ballard because of overcrowding at the junior high schools.

During the 1950s, Ballard students steadfastly adhered to their colors of red and black and their mascot, a hand-carved totem-like “Benny Beaver.” Student government at this time consisted of a 75-member legislature with a ratio of one delegate for each 30 pupils. Standing commit-



Ballard, 1916 SPSA 011-15

Name: **Ballard High School**
 Location: 1418 NW 65th Street
 Building: 3-story brick
 Architect: Edgar Blair
 Site: 2.31 acres

1916: Opened in January
 1921: 4.96-acre athletic field added at east end
 1925: Addition (Floyd A. Naramore); site expanded to 8.64 acres
 1940: Site expanded to 9.99 acres
 1941: Addition (Naramore)
 1959: Addition (Theo Damm)
 1997: Closed and demolished



Ballard, 1963 SPSA 011-31

Name: **Ballard High School**
 Location: 1418 NW 65th Street
 Building: Concrete and steel with masonry facade
 Architect: Mahlum & Nordfors
 McKinley Gordon
 Site: 12.71 acres

1998: Site expanded
 1999: Opened in September

tees assumed responsibility for everything from assembly planning to traffic safety. A large mural in the cafeteria painted by art students depicted Fishermen's Terminal and the Ballard Bridge.

With enrollment exceeding 2,200 in 1957–58, something had to be done. An addition and remodeling project radically changed the appearance of the building. A two-story wing containing classrooms and offices wrapped around the front (south) side. A gymnasium was built adjacent to the new main entry on the east side. A cafeteria and north wing with science classrooms were also added, and the girls gym, auditorium, and four classrooms were remodeled. The library took over the space where the old lunchroom had been in the center of the building. All of this increased space was put to good use when enrollment climbed to 2,532 students in 1963–64 and Ballard teachers numbered 101.

In the early 1970s, *The Shingle*, the school's annual, received its 15th consecutive "All-American" rating from the University of Minnesota. In 1972, the Seattle Parks Department constructed a swimming pool adjacent to the school.

Enrollment at Ballard declined steadily during the 1970s but increased again in 1981 after Queen Anne and Lincoln closed, and some of the students from those schools chose to attend Ballard. A tradition of offering Norwegian language classes ended in 1989.

The district construction plan included in the 1984 bond issue called for remodeling Ballard but the building was found to have too many deficiencies for modernization. In 1991, Superintendent William Kendrick recommended that Ballard be torn down and replaced with a new facility.

It took much longer than anticipated to realize the dream of a new school. The initial attempts to pass a bond issue for school construction failed. Not until February 1995 did the public vote favorably on a six-year levy. In order to expand the site to the largest extent possible, a parcel of land at the southwestern corner (formerly occupied by a gas station) was purchased in 1996.

An all-class reunion took place in May 1997 and over 15,000 past and present students bid adieu to the old building. Lincoln High School became Ballard's home-away-from-home beginning in September 1997. At the October 25, 1997 ground-breaking ceremony, the crowd broke into an impromptu cheer from the past: "Lutefisk, lutefisk, lefse, lefse. We're from Ballard. Ya, sure, You betcha."

The new Ballard High School building was designed to reflect the image of the 1916 vintage structure while incorporating the qualities of a 21st century learning environment. The new school focuses on science and technology and contains an aeronautics testing facility and biotechnology laboratory. A Maritime Institute introduces interested students to aspects of the maritime industries. The library is named for the late Superintendent John Stanford. The Performing Arts Center has been dedicated to Earl Kelly who headed Ballard's drama department from 1953 to 1987.