

Ballard

Name: Ballard High School	Enrollment: 1669
Address: 1418 NW 65th Street	Nickname: Beavers (Bucky)
Configuration: 9-12	Colors: Red and black
Newspaper: <i>The Talisman</i>	Annual: <i>The Shingle</i>



Ballard, 2000 ©Mary Randlett SPSA 011-63

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. Captain William Rankin Ballard was the namesake of the town. Captain Ballard was owner of 160 acres of the Salmon Bay claim and he was one of the men that formed the West Coast Improvement Company, which was a successful real estate development company on Puget Sound. When Ballard was incorporated in 1890, its sawmills produced 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 American citizens. 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 1-8 and Ballard High School



Central School in Ballard, 1905 MOHAI 83.10.9853

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 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. In 1918, when the choir director asked for interested students, nearly 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.

Details:

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

Details:

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)

1996: Site expanded to 12.3 acres

1997: Closed for construction; building demolished; Students relocated to Lincoln as interim site



Ballard, 1916 SPSA 011-15

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 only by a tie against Broadway. The original nickname for the team, the Shingle Weavers, reflected 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:



Irving, ca. 1940 SPSA 099-1



Ballard, 1963 SPSA 011-31

9th 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 every 30 pupils. Standing committees 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 girl’s 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 beneficial 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.

Details:

Name: **Ballard High School**

Location: 1418 NW 65th Street

Architect: Mahlum & Nordfors
McKinley Gordon

Site: 12.3 acres

1999: New building opened (BEX I)

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. 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, groundbreaking ceremony, the crowd broke into an impromptu cheer from the past: "Lutefisk, lutefisk, lefse, lefse. We're from Ballard. Ya, sure, You betcha!"

Ballard High School Foundation Art Committee members Alice Rooney and Matthew Kangas (a Ballard alumnus and acclaimed art critic), and other alums were consulted on the design of the new high school building. In 1998, they launched a new art program called the Orre Nobles Art Collection to collect and display art on the interior walls of the new high school building. The foundation owns and maintains the collection, which presently contains 78 pieces of art that reflect the history of the school and surrounding neighborhoods of Ballard, Magnolia, Greenwood, and Queen Anne Hill; depicts Ballard history; reflects the ethnic demographics of the student body; and honors important artists who live in Ballard.

With the art program in mind, architects Mahlum & Nordfors McKinley Gordon designed the new 240,000-square-foot Ballard High School building to reflect the image of the 1916 vintage structure while incorporating the qualities of a twenty-first century learning environment. Kiewit Construction completed the building in time for the 1999-2000 school year. The new school opened with a focus on science and technology and included 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.

Ballard High School saw an increase in enrollment from 1,333 in 1999 to 1,674 in 2006. During this time, Ballard added additional programs including the Academy of Finance, Project Lead the Way (for engineering), video production, Cisco networking, and the Ninth Grade Academy to help transition students to honors and AP programs. Many of these programs, as well as the teachers and students within them, have earned recognition for their repeated success.

Ballard science teacher Toni Bukowski's work to develop a strong inquiry-based science program for 9th and 10th graders along with her advocacy for Ballard's greenhouse addition project earned her the High School Teacher of the Year award in 2003 from the Washington State Science Teacher Association. After her death in 2008, Ballard's greenhouse was renamed "Mrs. B's Greenhouse" at the request of students.

Students of the video production program, started by teacher Matt Lawrence in 2001, have earned over 700 awards locally, nationally, and internationally during Lawrence's tenure through 2019. Enrollment grew during these more recent years, peaking at 1,971 students in 2018. With the opening of Lincoln in 2019, Ballard's enrollment numbers decreased.

In 2016, school hours for high school students were pushed to later times, which reduced after school daylight hours available for outdoor athletic activities and community events. This was identified as a significant adverse



Ballard, 2000 ©Mary Randlett SPSA 011-61

impact in the Change in School Start Times Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). As a result, the district and the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation worked together to develop plans for installing lights at several district-owned athletic fields around the city, including at Ballard, which was done in 2018.