

Columbia Annex



Rainier Vista, ca. 1945 SPSA 214-1

Details:

Name: **Rainier Vista School**

Location: 3100 S Alaska Street

Building: 3-room wood

Architect: Holmes & Bain

Site: 1.75 acres

1944: Opened as annex to Columbia in September

1947: Purchased by Seattle School District in July

1948: Nursery building leased

1951: Nursery building deeded to Seattle School District

1955: Renamed Columbia Annex on February 23

1971: Closed as a regular school in June

1971-2000: Used for Head Start

2001-07: Used for school district's south enrollment center

2007-12: Used for Interagency Academy

2014-Present: Used by AfricaTown Center for Education and Innovation

Rainier Vista School was built in 1943 with federal funds at the Rainier Vista Housing Project for wartime workers who were mostly employed at Boeing. It was leased to the Seattle School District in September 1944 when it opened. The children attending during that first year were in grades K-1, and most lived in the project apartments. The district purchased the site after the end of the war.

Additionally, the federal government built an annex as an emergency building to care for preschool children of working mothers during the war. It was used as a nursery school until August 1948, when the program was discontinued. The building was then leased by the district as part of Rainier Vista School.

From 1946 to 1964, the grade configuration was K-2, except in 1949-53, when it was K-3. In 1960-61, all five rooms in the main building and annex were in use.

Since the school closed in 1971, the building has served a wide variety of purposes. It housed the offices and preschool classes of Head Start until June 2000, when the program was moved to Wilson. Thereafter, it became the school district's South Enrollment center until late 2007. The Interagency Academy, a small alternative high school for at-risk youth, moved into the building and operated there until 2013 before establishing its permanent home at the main Columbia school building (3528 S Ferdinand St). The AfricaTown Center for Education and Innovation, a nonprofit dedicated to enhancing the education of African American students in partnership with the school district, has occupied the building with reduced rent from January 2014 to the present (2023). As an aligned program, ACEI is annually reviewed by the school district.

The building underwent renovation in 2002. This work included a new roof and fire-alarm system, as well as seismic and technology upgrades. In 2004, the school district sold a 600-square-foot portion of the property to Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority for use as a sidewalk. Plans for seismic improvements and fire-alarm upgrades began in 2015 and were completed with funds from BEX V.