

Gatewood

Name: Gatewood Elementary School	Enrollment: 363
Address: 4320 SW Myrtle Street	Nickname: Gators
Configuration: K-5	Colors: Green and gold



Gatewood, 2000 ©Mary Randlett SPSA 225-12

The namesake of this West Seattle school was a real estate developer, as its origins are closely tied to the growth of the surrounding neighborhoods. In 1907, a streetcar line began operating along California Avenue and down Myrtle Street, in some places traveling on an elevated trestle. This vital transportation link was financed by Carlisle Gatewood, who also platted Gatewood Acre Tracts and Gatewood Gardens, two new residential districts.

Once families began settling in the Gatewood area, it was evident that a local school was needed. Children were traveling quite a distance to attend Lafayette. In 1908, residents established a “pioneer school” for 12 students in a contractor’s old barn. In the meantime, the Seattle School Board purchased land to the west of the two Gatewood residential tracts. During the 1909-10 school year, students in K-4 and teachers occupied portables on the site while their permanent building was being constructed.

The new nine-room Jacobean-style building epitomized the district’s improved standard of three-story brick fireproof construction and was similar to Muir and West Woodland. Gatewood opened in September 1910 with 268 students in grades 1-8. The first principal, A. N. Thompson, said that the school’s name suited its location on an open spot surrounded by woods with a gate leading to a nearby park. At lunchtime, soup was prepared in the home of a neighbor, Mrs. McClary, and carried down to the school.

Enrollment at Gatewood increased gradually in the years prior to World War I. By 1920, enrollment reached 654 and several portables dotted the grounds. The board agreed to purchase the rest of the block west of the school to make room for expansion, and a new west wing opened in 1922 with eight classrooms and a lunchroom/auditorium. Two play courts provided shelter for outdoor activities. The school’s population remained stable for several years but by 1937 had dropped to 425 pupils.

During World War II, Gatewood experienced rapid growth as enrollment jumped to 768 in April 1943. The High Point Housing Project for defense workers had opened in 1942 and, until a school could be built at High

Details:

Name: **Gatewood School**
Location: 4320 SW Myrtle Street
Building: 3-story brick
Architect: Edgar Blair
Site: 1.67 acres

1910: Opened
1920: Site increased to 3.6 acres
1922: Addition (Floyd A. Naramore)
1988: Exteriors designated city landmark
1989-91: 1922 addition demolished; site increased to 4.2 acres; Students relocated to Genessee Hill as interim location
1991: Addition and renovation (ECI Architects)
2017: Seismic upgrades

and it was designated as a city landmark. The renovation, undertaken in 1989-91, received an award from the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation as it preserved the building's Jacobean character while "maintaining a respectful, contextual relationship between the original and new addition." The existing brick walls were reinforced, and the brick additions trimmed to resemble the original terra cotta decoration. During the renovation, Gatewood students were temporarily housed at Genessee Hill.

The renovated building includes 16 modern classrooms in a wing to the east and a new gymnasium and auditorium/lunchroom in a wing to the west. The 1922 addition was demolished. A new staircase to the playfield was built down the hill on the west side. In the course of remodeling, a plaque in memory of Clara A. Kermode was



Gatewood, 1960 SPSA 225-8

Point, children traveled by bus to Gatewood and Cooper. To accommodate the influx at Gatewood, the old shop and sewing room were converted into classrooms.

Wartime activities included a Victory Garden Store where once a week children did their "shopping" amongst emptied cans of rationed goods.

Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, a petition was circulated calling for the removal of Japanese American clerks from their administrative jobs in Seattle Public Schools. Though it occurred across the district, this drive began with the PTA at Gatewood, where one clerk lost her position.

Another burst in enrollment occurred in the 1950s. Portables once again appeared as over 800 students attended Gatewood. In 1959, the playfield was converted to hard scape play areas.

Under the district's desegregation plan, Gatewood housed grades K, 4-6 and formed a triad with Arbor Heights and Van Asselt beginning in 1979. An engineering study conducted in the 1980s indicated that Gatewood would be unsafe in the event of an earthquake, and the building received top priority rating for replacement or renovation. In 1988, community members petitioned to save the historic structure

and it was discovered and moved to a new location. Kermode taught at Gatewood from 1919-1955 and was fondly remembered by her former 3rd graders.

In the early 2000s, the school program included team teaching classes with a mix of grade levels. Special education students were taught in regular classes.

In 2009, renovations were done to repair, replace, and refurbish the floors, wall coverings, and the stage curtain based on conditions noted in the 2006 Seattle Condition Survey (Meng Analysis).