

# Olympic Hills

Name: Olympic Hills Elementary School	Enrollment: 501
Address: 13018 20th Avenue NE	Nickname:
Configuration: K-5	Colors:



Olympic Hills, 2018 ©Francis Zera SPSA 261-94

## Details:

Name: **Olympic Hills School**

Location: 13018 20th Avenue NE

Building: 17-room brick

Architect: John Graham & Co.

Site: 6.48 acres

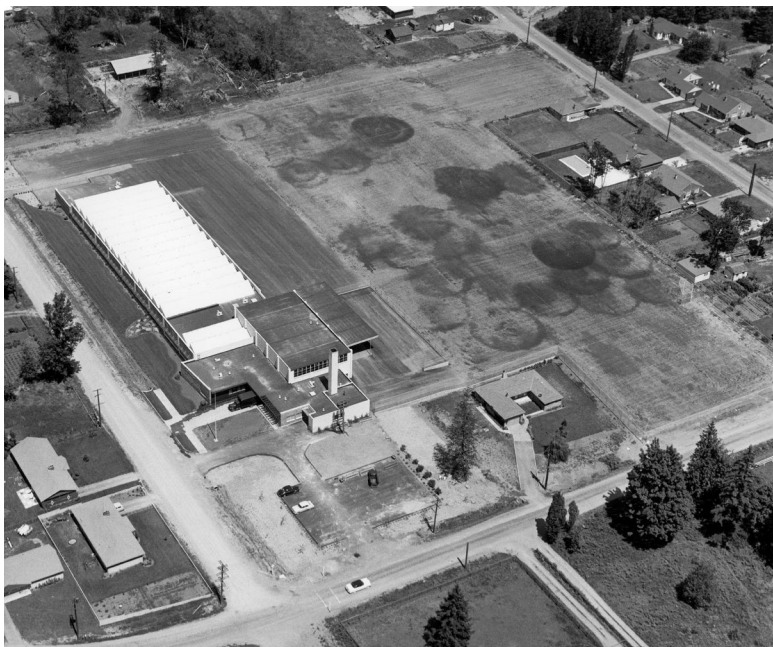
1954: Opened in September

2015: School closed and demolished;  
Students relocated to Cedar  
Park as interim site

Olympic Hills School is the third Seattle Public School with “Olympic” in its name (see Olympic and Olympic View). It was planned, named, and its construction started by the Shoreline School District, but before it opened in 1954, the Lake City area was annexed into the City of Seattle. The school opened in the Seattle School District with 585 pupils.

In 1955, the school grounds were landscaped and two outdoor basketball courts were added. Grass was planted on part of the playfield and the play area next to the school was paved. Two additional lavatories were constructed on the north side of the building in 1957. From 1954-58, the school carnival embraced a Western theme and was called the Olympic Hills Roundup. In 1958-59, it was modernized to a space-age theme and renamed the Olympic Hills Rocket Roundup.

Enrollment grew steadily, and in 1962-63 nine portables were needed to help house the 800 pupils. After that peak, enrollment declined to about 360 in 1976. By then, the last of the portables had been removed from the grounds.



Olympic Hills, 1955 SPSA 261-1

## Details:

Name: **Olympic Hills  
Elementary School**  
 Location: 13018 20th Avenue NE  
 Building: 32 classrooms  
 Architect: McGranahan Architects  
 Site: 6.48 acres

2017: New school opened (BEX IV)

A successful Career Education Program began in 1971, involving a variety of community members who visited classrooms to talk about their jobs. Field trips also provided students with a first-hand view of different occupations. A Career Education Achievement Fair held in 1974 displayed

products designed and produced by each class. The Outdoor Education Program was introduced in 1972-73 and culminated each spring with a three-day campout for 6th graders at Cornet Bay Youth Camp at Deception Pass State Park. The destination changed around 1980, but the program continued to enhance student awareness of the natural environment.

From a modest beginning of just a few books, the school's library took shape and by 1957 had its own room and 4,000 volumes. In 1970, an expanded learning resource center opened and became the hub of the school, used not only for reading activities but also for several other programs. It was named for librarian Lorena Slover, who was largely responsible for its creation. Outside of the door to the LRC is a painting of "Oly" the Otter, the student-selected mascot for their newspaper, Little Oly.

Under the district's 1978 desegregation plan, Olympic Hills (K, 1-3) formed a triad with Rogers (K, 1-3) and Madrona (K, 4-6) during the 1979-81 school years. Olympic Hills returned to a K-6 configuration in September 1981 and K-5 in 1989.



Olympic Hills, 1960 SPSA 261-3



Olympic Hills, 2018 ©Francis Zera SPSA 261-93

In 2000, the project-based curriculum at Olympic Hills allowed for choice between single grade level classes or a mix of grade levels. The school continued its emphasis on experiential learning and students took frequent field trips, sharing what they learned at weekly celebration assemblies. An all-school trip to Camp Long in West Seattle was a highlight of the school year. Students helped create a school songbook and campfire skits for this end-of-the-year experience. In 2007, Olympic Hills was one of 14 schools in King County to receive a “school of distinction” award from the state Superintendent of Public Instruction. The award went to schools that had made the most progress over the previous six years in reading and writing on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL). The winning schools represented the top 5 percent of the state’s 2,500 schools judged by how many students moved up at least one level in reading or math.

In 2016, Olympic Hills again was recognized for academic excellence with the highest academic scores for students of color in the state.

After more than 60 years of service, Olympic Hills Elementary was demolished in 2015 and a new school was constructed with funds from the BEX IV levy. With construction ongoing, Olympic Hills students were relocated to Cedar Park School in Lake City as their interim site.

The 34,000-square-foot building and two portables were replaced by a 90,000-square-foot school with capacity for 660 students. The new building includes six classroom wings, a library, a student commons and dining area, a gymnasium, art and music facilities, and computer labs. Three classrooms with an adjacent play area were set aside for Head Start and preschool programs, and a space near the library was earmarked for adult learning. The school organizes students into smaller groups based on their learning level and interests. The building design supports and enhances this approach by creating several smaller settings within each classroom, and shared space that brings services closer to classroom groupings.

The athletic field in the northeast corner of the property was rebuilt to accommodate two youth soccer fields and continued community access. A celebratory ribbon-cutting for the new school was held on August 31, 2017.