

Queen Anne High School



Queen Anne, 1940 SPSA 016-12

Seattle experienced rapid population growth during the years following the Alaska Gold Rush. Between 1902 and 1910, Seattle's total high school enrollment leaped from approximately 700 to around 4,500 students. Several new elementary schools were constructed atop Queen Anne Hill, and it was evident that a new high school would be needed to accommodate these students as they moved on to 9th grade.

When discussing the location for the new school, some argued for a Denny Regrade site closer to downtown, but in the end, Queen Anne Hill won and a site was purchased there in 1906. Construction began in 1908, and the following autumn classes began with 613 students and 33 teachers. Originally the school was named Jefferson High School, but the local community protested to the Seattle School Board and the school was renamed Queen Anne High School.

School board President John Schram remarked that students would receive a “higher sense of self-respect if the building and its surroundings and equipment command their admiration.” To this end, the new high school was designed in a classic style reminiscent of English late-Renaissance palaces complete with terra cotta ornamentation, intentionally celebrating education by creating a grand and imposing environment. Visitors at the dedication in February 1910 were impressed with the facility, which included laboratories and rooms for manual training and domestic science. “Surely there is no school in the United States that has such a breathtaking setting ... The marvelous building on top of the hill became an architectural landmark visible throughout the city.”

The first principal to head Queen Anne was Otto Luther, a 28-year-old history teacher from Broadway High School. “The high school is the peoples’ college,” Luther stated, and he set high academic standards for the students. In addition to students from Queen Anne and Magnolia, young people from as far away as Port Orchard flocked to attend the new school as its reputation grew, especially in athletics, debate, and drama. From 1909 to 1911, the school also contained an 8th grade center.

Early high school teaching staff included Winona Bailey, noted mountaineer and Latin expert; Samuel E. Fleming, history instructor and later superintendent of Seattle Public Schools; J. Harlan Bretz, science instructor and geologist; and Benno J. Uhl, a popular German teacher who wrote the first school song.

The school paper, the *Kuay* after the school's initials, QA, began as a monthly in November 1909. An end-of-the-year commencement issue evolved into the school annual. The paper became a bimonthly publication in 1918 and then a weekly in 1921.

In 1928, construction began to expand the facility with 10 additional classrooms, a boys' gymnasium, a botany laboratory and greenhouse, and an auditorium. The addition carried on the structure and ornamentation of the original building. The new auditorium was considered the finest among Seattle's schools.

A popular student hangout, the Grizzly Inn (214 Galer Street), stood across from the school and was a center of social activity at lunchtime and after school. The restaurant hosted an annual celebration dinner for the football team. Inspired by the inn's name, the student body selected the grizzly bear as their school logo in 1930, and in 1932, the *Kuay* yearbook was renamed *The Grizzly*.

The carved wooden grizzly bear that stood on the Inn's roof became a favorite target for pranksters, including students from rival schools. "It was always being stolen or was missing," according to a student from that era. An annual talent show known as *Kuay Kapers* also became a tradition about this time. The school colors were maroon and orange.

During World War II, "there was a whole group taking extra classes so we could graduate early and join the service," a graduate explained. Queen Anne's enrollment dropped from 1,872 in 1942-43 to 1,426 the following year. To take advantage of the extra space, in September 1943 an 8th grade center was established to relieve overcrowding in Lawton and Magnolia schools.

Otto Luther retired in 1951 after serving as principal of Queen Anne for 42 years, a tenure which at the time was said to have been the longest in Seattle Public School history. George S. Farmer, who had been vice principal since 1942, succeeded Luther and served as principal until 1967.

The 8th grade center was replaced on the site by Queen Anne Junior High for grades 8-9 in 1952. The junior high expanded to include 7th graders in 1955. A second major addition in 1955 added an Industrial Arts Building on the west, connected to the 1929 addition by a breezeway, and provided a freestanding lunchroom and music building on the east. Also during this year, a pipe organ from an old theater in Everett was installed in the auditorium, using funds raised for student activities. In 1958, a new athletic field named after Otto L. Luther was built across the street to the north, taking the place of the old Grizzly Inn, which closed in 1954.

In 1961, a new 2,200-seat gymnasium was constructed across Second Avenue N, on the site of the old Beanery, which had provided students with penny candy, Popsicles, pencils, paper, and hamburgers. "In order to

Details:

Name: **Queen Anne High School**

Location: 215 Galer Street

Building: 4-story reinforced concrete and brick

Architect: James Stephen

Site: 2.32 acres

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- 1908: Named Jefferson High School on July 14; changed to Queen Anne High School on October 7
 - 1909: Opened in September
 - 1921: Site expanded to 2.98 acres
 - 1928: Addition (Floyd A. Naramore)
 - 1954-56: Site expanded to 6.15 acres
 - 1955: Addition (Naramore, Bain, Brady & Johanson)
 - 1961: New gymnasium building opened
 - 1981: School closed in June
 - 1984: Placed on the National Register of Historic Place; site leased for residential use
 - 1985: Designated City of Seattle landmark on May 6
 - 1987: Building converted to apartments, The Queen Anne
 - 2005: Property sold to Legacy Partners
 - 2006: Units converted to condos
 - Present: Site of Queen Anne High School Condominiums

meet the building code the playfield ... was supposed to be able to park 220 cars. But locks were placed on the gates so that no vehicles would enter and damage the track or playing surface.”

The literary magazine *Paw Prints* was launched in 1960, publishing creative works by student authors. Also at this time, the *Kuay* had the distinction of being the only eight-column, weekly, self-supporting school paper in the United States. Ernest Charland, who guided budding journalists as advisor of the *Kuay* since 1946, retired in 1971. He noted, “At one time I had five of my former students working on the *P-I* [*Seattle Post-Intelligencer*].”

Beginning in the early 1960s, the school was known as Queen Anne Junior-Senior High School, and enrollment reached 2,850 in grades 7-12. Younger students left the school when the new McClure Junior High opened nearby in September 1964.

The 1960s and 1970s witnessed considerable social change, which was reflected in activities at the high school. Students formed a somewhat controversial Queen Anne Student Union to examine issues of concern to students and faculty. Queen Anne established a unique student-run traffic court where offenders apprehended for traffic violations were sentenced by elected peers.

In fall 1972, an alternative program called the Counterbalance began for students in grades 10-12 from the Queen Anne High School service area. The program, with an enrollment of 150 during 1974-75, offered more flexibility in course selection and class attendance requirements.

With only 850 students in 1980-81 and the building’s deteriorating condition, the decision was made to close the school at the end of the school year. Despite protests, the school closed, and students were transferred to Franklin, along with the historic pipe organ.

The school was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984. That year, the Seattle School District, in cooperation with Historic Seattle Preservation and Development Authority, chose a local development



T H E Q U E E N A N N E

Queen Anne, architects’ drawing, 1908 SPSA 016-74



Queen Anne, 1963 SPSA 016-87

company, Lorig Associates, to lease the site and convert it for residential use while preserving its historic character. The conversion to apartments took place in 1987. More than 200,000 feet of classroom space was transformed into 139 apartments, several retained the tall windows and blackboards left over from the original school. The former boiler room was turned into a party room, and the 1929 auditorium-gymnasium, in the center of the structure, was demolished to create a circular driveway and entrance. The building was renamed The Queen Anne.

Both the athletic field and gymnasium were excluded from the 1984 lease. The field became the site of the new John Hay, which opened in 1989. The gym was scheduled for community use until 2011, when an Interagency program was moved into the building. In November 2005, the leased property was sold to Legacy Partners. In 2006, building improvements were made, and the units were converted to condominiums and renamed Queen Anne High School Condos. A hallway display case with historic photos and school memorabilia was installed inside the building.