

**Property Name and Address:** Bolton Primary School, 5933 Holmes St, West Linn

**Exterior Description**

Construction Date: 1950 Note source (estimated, deed, other record(s): *Past & Present* (West Linn Historical Society, 2024), p. 88; John D. Stuckey, Director of School Planning, *Historical Development of the West Linn School District* (West Linn School District, Dec. 1974), p. 1-12.

Original use.  Domestic  Commercial  Government  Industrial  Agricultural

Check all that apply

x Other: Public School

Siding material(s).  Horizontal Wood  Vertical Board  Brick  Stone  Asbestos  Vinyl

Check all that apply

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**Write a general exterior description, including building shape, height, roof type, and any special features.**

Bolton Primary School's red brick facade, flat roof lines and horizontal emphasis are characteristic of mid-century, postwar architecture which prioritized economy, flexibility, natural light and open space for young students' general welfare. The school building's single-story structure has a rectangular footprint with extended wings, which create a sprawling, low-rise appearance. Designed to blend into the surrounding residential neighborhood which slopes down to the Willamette River, its daylight basement design connects the elevation difference between Willamette Drive/Highway 43 and Perrin Street. There is a distinct main entry area with glass doors and adjacent signage, enhancing visibility and accessibility for visitors. Like many postwar schools of its era, Bolton was designed to adopt modernist designs, utilizing steel framing, plate glass and a low-rise, horizontal structure. The school features a combination of roof types: most of the building is flat roofed but there is a unique, distinctive curved portion with extended eaves at the lower entrance.

**Write a general interior description, including general layout, major rooms, and any special features.**

Designed with large windows for natural light, access to outdoor spaces, and features that facilitate hands-on, child-centered learning: group activities, sinks for project work and built-in reading nooks, Bolton's classrooms are a model of mid-century architecture. Bolton's interior was made to feel "homelike," with features like colorful walls, built-in seating by windows, built-in storage cubbies, wall stations, and room for movable furniture all aimed to foster creativity and a sense of autonomy in children. At the heart of the building, the library serves as a central hub for learning resources and community gatherings. It is easily accessible from all classrooms and other major areas and is full of natural light. Near the main entrance, the gymnasium and stage serve multiple purposes, functioning as a space for physical education, school gatherings, and community events. Common to postwar era school buildings, it features brick walls, exposed ventilation, vaulted space and a stage. The cafeteria and kitchen are located in the basement, across from the library. The school provides small calming rooms for disabled students and with its mid-century architectural design goal of flexibility and open space, the wide hallways double nowadays as extra learning space for students in need of individualized instruction.

**List known or probable alterations and the approximate date the work was done.**

The main, original floor measured 78' x 214' and included ten classrooms, an office, library, teachers' room, health room, arts and sewing room, music room, a gymnasium, the entryway and was built in 1950.<sup>1</sup> The basement included the cafeteria, kitchen, PE dressing rooms, a training room, boiler room and storage room. Three classrooms and a connecting hallway were added to the right rear in 1954 for \$46,974. In 1957, three additional classrooms, a hallway and a covered playshed were constructed. A further expansion in 1965 included three classrooms, bathrooms and two teacher's restrooms for \$64,265.<sup>2</sup> Remodeling the rear addition for West Linn Public Library use occurred in 2000 with classroom divisions being reconstructed in 2001. In 2010, the naturally lit school library was designed in a daylight basement concept that connected the upper and lower addition, reimagining their connecting hallway and opened the school even further to the outdoor garden and playground spaces. The original exterior brick was artfully maintained inside the connecting space. Each early expansion to modernize education and improve facilities was partly driven by Cold War pressures, and while preserving the building's postwar architectural cohesion, they enhanced its symbol of national strength and progress. Later remodels maintained the design elements and materials of the original architectural design. Together, the current Bolton School reflects our community's disposition during the historical context of mid-century, Pacific Northwest America.

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<sup>1</sup> *Past & Present* (West Linn Historical Society, 2024), p.88.

<sup>2</sup> John D. Stuckey, Director of School Planning, *Historical Development of the West Linn School District* (West Linn School District, Dec. 1974), p.1-11-1-13.  
Updated July 28, 2020

## Building History

Please explain what events and persons are associated with this property and whether the building's architecture or the construction methods used to build it are noteworthy. Use additional pages if necessary.

### Historical Land Significance:

Bolton Primary School is built on the traditional lands of the Ne-ka-mas<sup>3</sup> (the Clowewalla Clackamas peoples),<sup>4</sup> specifically between the notable Walamt Village (the Willamette River and Willamette Valley namesake),<sup>5</sup> and Willamette Drive/Highway 43, originally a native trading route but now a heavily trafficked arterial<sup>6</sup> that runs to downtown Portland. The present Bolton neighborhood is located along the Willamette River at the foot of the Willamette Falls National Heritage Area.<sup>7</sup>

Bolton School is located on Hugh Burns's land claim of 1842 on which he formed Multnomah City with land he claimed from the Walamt village.<sup>8</sup> The future school property was incorporated into West Linn in 1923 (plots 24, 25, 26)<sup>9</sup> and is part of the current Bolton Neighborhood. The Bolton neighborhood includes national historic residential landmarks and local historic homes,<sup>10</sup> along with a mix of post World War II and modern residences. It includes several riverside parks, the historic Willamette River Locks, the West Linn Paper Company, West Linn Public Library, a bustling commercial district<sup>11</sup> and the historic Holly Grove neighborhood.<sup>12</sup>

Bolton School's origins trace back to 1892, when it began as a small school in a store, before a permanent building was constructed in 1922. In 1949, the Bolton PTA was informed by Superintendent Chester Tunnell of the possibility of building a new school and the group voted to circulate a petition to

<sup>3</sup> Kimberli Fitzgerald and Amy McFeeters-Krone, *City of West Linn Historic Context Statement, Willamette and Holly Grove Neighborhoods* (Summer 2006),

[https://westlinnoregon.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning/page/5928/historic\\_context\\_statement\\_0.pdf](https://westlinnoregon.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planning/page/5928/historic_context_statement_0.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Kristopher K. Townsend, "The Clackamas," Discover Lewis and Clark,

<https://lewis-clark.org/native-nations/chinookan-peoples/clackamas/>

<sup>5</sup> David Lewis, "Willamette Falls" *Oregon Encyclopedia*, [https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/willamette\\_falls/](https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/willamette_falls/); Ronald Kent, "Oregon Archaeological Survey," University of Oregon, Museum of Natural History (June 30, 1977); "Early Inhabitants of the Maddax Woods Area," *The Meteor: The Quarterly Journal of the West Linn Historical Society*, 2, no. 2, (Summer 2023): 13, <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uCzjS02ecNKKc2QwQZCBHGaHBsKx4MIG/view>.

<sup>6</sup> "1954 West Linn Street Map," Historical Maps, West Linn Historical Society, <https://www.westlinnhistory.org/research/historic-maps>

<sup>7</sup> "Willamette Falls," National Park Service, <https://www.nps.gov/places/willamette-falls.htm>. See footnote 3 also.

<sup>8</sup> "Hugh Daniel Burns," Oregon Encyclopedia, <https://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/articles/burns-hugh-daniel/pdf>

<sup>9</sup> "1923 Moody Plat of Holly Gardens," Historical Maps, West Linn Historical Society, <https://www.westlinnhistory.org/research/historic-maps>

<sup>10</sup> West Linn Historic Landmarks, <https://westlinnoregon.gov/planning/historic-landmarks>

<sup>11</sup> "Historic Bolton Neighborhood Walking Tour," Bolton Neighborhood Assoc. (2008),

[https://westlinnoregon.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/library/page/7380/bolton\\_neighborhood\\_tour.pdf](https://westlinnoregon.gov/sites/default/files/fileattachments/library/page/7380/bolton_neighborhood_tour.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> City of West Linn Historic Resource Map, [https://westlinnoregon.gov/sites/default/files/gis/Historic\\_Resource\\_Map.pdf](https://westlinnoregon.gov/sites/default/files/gis/Historic_Resource_Map.pdf)  
Updated July 28, 2020

include a new Bolton School building on the ballot.<sup>13</sup> The current site was constructed in 1950 for \$393,813, housing students in first through fifth grade,<sup>14</sup> and with its construction dawned the formation of the current West Linn School District,<sup>15</sup> when West Linn School District 3, Wilsonville School District 23 and the Stafford School District 4 were consolidated.<sup>16</sup>

### **Architecture:**

Built in 1950, Bolton School was constructed during a period of modernization and new construction initiated by the West Linn School District after World War II. It was designed by Donald W. Edmundson (1904-1991), a prominent Oregon architect particularly known for his work on public and community buildings, including banks, churches, federal buildings and schools.<sup>17</sup> Bolton School is a model of mid-century school design and includes many of the characteristic design elements: floor plans laid out to maximize space, flexibility and potential for socializing, floor plans and landscaping designed to create connections between indoor and outdoor spaces, facades featuring large windows and ribbon windows, space to accommodate easy expansion later, contrasting exterior wall materials, and a single story design with low pitched roof and deep eave overhangs integrating the building into the surrounding landscape and growing residential neighborhood. In the 1950's, Bolton was toured by many school boards from around the state as an ultimate model of modern educational design.<sup>18</sup>

Edmundson's design has confirmed the hypothesis it set out to prove: economically produced materials constructed to form flexible spaces that easily accommodate expansion can exist in a one story, daylight basement design that remains unobtrusive to a walkable neighborhood, all while providing access to a dynamic education throughout decades of time. In 74 years, the building has served as its originally designed elementary school, a middle school, a high school annex, a preschool and a public library,

<sup>13</sup> Bolton PTA Minutes, October 1937–May 1950, p.136-137. Original in the possession of Bolton School.

<sup>14</sup> See Footnote 2.

<sup>15</sup> Bolton PTA Minutes, October 1937–May 1950, p.145-146. Original in the possession of Bolton School.

<sup>16</sup> "West Linn History Timeline, 1945-1956," West Linn Historical Society,

<https://www.westlinnhistory.org/history/west-linn-history-timeline/west-linn-area-1945-to-1956>

<sup>17</sup> Edmundson and some of his most prominent works are listed in the 1956 American Architects Directory, p.151, <https://aiahistoricaldirectory.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/AHDAA/pages/20644319/1956+American+Architects+Directory>; the 1962 American Architects Directory,

<https://aiahistoricaldirectory.atlassian.net/wiki/spaces/AHDAA/pages/20677106/1962+American+Architects+Directory> and the 1972 American Architects Directory, [https://aiahistoricaldirectory.atlassian.net/wiki/x/LoE\\_AQ](https://aiahistoricaldirectory.atlassian.net/wiki/x/LoE_AQ). See also an article about his career:

"Edmundson Opens New Offices in Spalding Building," *The Oregon Daily Journal* (Apr. 20, 1941), p.10,

<https://www.newspapers.com/image/1091066127/>. His obituary also lists many of the buildings he built - see "Donald William Edmundson," *The Oregonian* (June 24, 1991), p.25. Edmundson's trail blazing work on federal buildings and bank buildings is recognized in Judith H Robinson and Stephanie S. Foell, *Growth Efficiency and Modernism: GSA Buildings of the 1950s 60s and 70s* (United States General Services Administration, September 2003), 33 and W.S. Kidd, "A Bank as an Art and Architectural Patron," *Journal of the American Institute of Architects* (November 1966), 46: 5, 60-65. See also Bolton PTA Minutes, October 1937–May 1950, p.143-144.

<sup>18</sup> Kris A. Geldaker, *Hometown Study–West Linn, Oregon* (December 8, 1980), p.12. Original in the possession of the West Linn Public Library.

providing the flexibility that a fledgling, industrial town which grew into a well-loved, high-valued satellite of Portland demanded over the years of human and community growth.

Edmundson's other known works include: Portland's Kelly Clinton School,<sup>19</sup> Jason Lee Elementary School,<sup>20</sup> Mock Crest Evangelical Church,<sup>21</sup> as well as George School.<sup>22</sup> He has also been recognized for his path-breaking architectural work designing the modernist David H. Wheeler U.S. Federal Office Building in Baker City, Oregon and the United States National Bank of Oregon building in Bend, Oregon.<sup>23</sup> Edmondson's architectural style and influence showcased functionality blended with stylistic elements that suited educational and public facilities of the mid-century, postwar era. His work has left a lasting mark on Oregon's architectural landscape, particularly in educational and public infrastructure across the state.

### Persons of Note:

Bolton School sits adjacent to Hammerle City Park: named after Frank Hammerle, a prominent local leader who was superintendent at Crown Zellerbach Paper Mill, the area's main employer, and served as mayor of West Linn in the 1930s. Hammerle's contributions to the community were instrumental in shaping both local industry and governance, making him a central figure in West Linn's development. His daughter-in-law, Mrs. Gordon Hammerle,<sup>24</sup> was the first grade teacher at Bolton School. **Andrea Hammerle**, granddaughter of early West Linn Mayor Frank Hammerle (1930's), attended and graduated Bolton School.<sup>25</sup>

Bolton Primary School was built and opened during **Chester Tunnell's** time as West Linn School District's superintendent (1946-1976).<sup>26</sup> Chester Tunnell is the father of **Doug Tunnell**, a distinguished foreign correspondent for CBS News, who covers major international events and has earned respect

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<sup>19</sup> Oregon Digital, Unique Cultural Heritage Collections, Kelly, Clinton, School (Portland, OR), <https://www.oregondigital.org/concern/documents/df67rn777?locale=en>

<sup>20</sup> Oregon Digital, Unique Cultural Heritage Collections, Lee School (Portland, OR) <https://www.oregondigital.org/concern/documents/df67rn823?locale=en>

<sup>21</sup> *The Sunday Oregonian* ( Oct. 3, 1948), p.71.

<sup>22</sup> Oregon Historic Site Form, George School, [https://www.pps.net/cms/lib/OR01913224/Centricity/Domain/58/Historic%20Building%20Assessment/George\\_ILS.pdf](https://www.pps.net/cms/lib/OR01913224/Centricity/Domain/58/Historic%20Building%20Assessment/George_ILS.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> See "United States Government, Federal Office Building, Wheeler, David J. Building, Baker City, OR (1969), Pacific Coast Architecture Database, <https://pcad.lib.washington.edu/building/3029/> and "United States National Bank of Oregon, Branch, Bend, OR (1963), Pacific Coast Architecture Database, <https://pcad.lib.washington.edu/building/7419/>. See more recognizing Edmundson's work on these buildings in Judith H Robinson and Stephanie S. Foell, *Growth Efficiency and Modernism: GSA Buildings of the 1950s 60s and 70s* (United States General Services Administration, September 2003), 33 and W.S. Kidd, "A Bank as an Art and Architectural Patron," *Journal of the American Institute of Architects* (November 1966), 46: 5, 60-65.

<sup>24</sup> 1950 United States Census, West Linn, Clackamas County, Oregon, Sheet 72.

<sup>25</sup> Bolton PTA Minutes, October 1937–May 1950, p.27-28. Original in the possession of Bolton School.

<sup>26</sup> *Just Yesterday: A Brief Story of West Linn, Oregon* (West Linn Bicentennial Comm. 1976), p.29, <https://studylib.net/doc/13518967/just-yesterday-a-brief-story-of-west-linn--oregon>

for his in-depth reporting.<sup>27</sup> His childhood was “spent fishing and boating amid the log rafts of the Willamette river, downstream from two belching paper mills at Willamette Falls”<sup>28</sup>, while his mother served on Bolton School’s PTA.<sup>29</sup>

**Tim Tawa**, a remarkable athlete, is a graduate of Bolton School. In high school football he was a three time Gatorade player of the year, but after receiving a scholarship to Stanford to play baseball he is currently a pro-baseball phenomenon. In 2021 he was an 11th round draft pick by the Arizona Diamondbacks and in three short years he has risen to triple A level.<sup>30</sup>

**Anthony Glausi**, a Bolton School graduate, is a renowned American trumpeter, keyboardist, vocalist, composer, and music producer. Tony won first prize in the jazz division of the 2014 National Trumpet Competition, first prize in the International Trumpet Guild’s 2017 Jazz Improvisation Competition, and first prize in the 2017 Carmine Caruso International Jazz Solo Competition. He was also the sole recipient of the 2016-17 Laurie Frink Career Grant. He is currently on teaching staff at The New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music in New York and at the Idyllwild Arts Academy in Los Angeles. In the past he has also held teaching positions at the University of Oregon, where he completed his bachelor’s degree in jazz trumpet and his master’s degree in composition, and at the John G. Shedd Institute for the Arts, where he founded the Shedd Youth Jazz Orchestras.<sup>31</sup>

Alexander Forsyth, a Bolton graduate<sup>32</sup>, is now a professional football center for the Denver Broncos of the NFL, drafted in the seventh round with the 257th overall pick in the 2023 NFL draft. During his final year in college, playing for the University of Oregon, he rated as the second-best pass blocking center nationally according to PFF's rankings, and was named a second-team All American selection.

### **Bolton School’s Community Significance**

Bolton School sits at the heart of a historic Oregon neighborhood and exemplifies the 1940’s and 1950’s interest in nurturing students’ emotional development that emerged in educational theory after World War II. As mid-century educators promoted, Bolton School reflects their belief that the school

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<sup>27</sup> Cornelia Becker Seigneur, *West Linn* (Charleston, SC : Arcadia Publishing, 2008), p.39.

<sup>28</sup> “Our Story,” Brick House Wines.com, [Brickhousewines.com/team-brick-house](https://www.brickhousewines.com/team-brick-house)

<sup>29</sup> Bolton PTA Minutes, September 1950-May 1959, p.39-41. Original in the possession of Bolton School.

<sup>30</sup> “Athlete of the year Tim Tawa off to Stanford following remarkable run at West Linn,” *The Oregonian*, <https://www.oregonlive.com/highschoolsports/article/the-oregonianoregonlives/>; Principal’s Album, Bolton Primary, 2009-2010 Grade 5, Class Photo, Row 3, Original in the possession of Bolton School

<sup>31</sup> Principal’s Album, Bolton Primary, 2004-2005 Grade 4/5, Class Photo, Row 1, Original in the possession of Bolton School; 2004/2005 Class Photo, row 4, signature in lower right. Original in the possession of Bolton School.

<sup>32</sup> Principal’s Album, Bolton Primary, 2009-2010 Grade 5, Class Photo, Row 1, Original in the possession of Bolton School.

building needed to meet students' physical needs—sanitary, safe, quiet, well-lit as well as their emotional needs—pleasant, secure, inspiring, friendly, access to nature and restful. Bolton Primary remains a lasting symbol of the mid-century modern, post-war emphasis on public education as a cornerstone of community life. The school continues to serve as a hub for learning and community engagement, demonstrating the enduring impact of this period's educational priorities as a strength for the nation. In its time, the facility now known as Bolton Primary School has served as a preschool, an elementary school, the local middle school, a second West Linn High School<sup>33</sup> and hosted the West Linn Public Library.<sup>34</sup> Its structure and presence remind us of a time when schools were built with intention, not only to educate local students, but to strengthen neighborhoods and communities while providing a foundation for future generations. In this way, Bolton Primary School is more than a historic building: its legacy reflects West Linn's commitment to growth through learning, standing as a physical reminder of the profound postwar belief that the communal, neighborhood education of our young is still essential for a brighter, more secure national future.

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<sup>33</sup> "Memories of Bolton," *West Linn Tidings* (June 3, 1999), p. A6.

<sup>34</sup> "History of the West Linn Library," *The Meteor: The Quarterly Journal of the West Linn Historical Society*, 3, no. 1 (Summer 2024), p.11, [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JWoy\\_83UpWlr1HbW\\_d--lae9DY-h6ex/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JWoy_83UpWlr1HbW_d--lae9DY-h6ex/view)  
Updated July 28, 2020



# Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor

**Parks and Recreation Department**

725 Summer St. NE, Suite C

Salem, OR 97301-1271

(503) 986-0707

Fax (503) 986-0794

stateparks.oregon.gov

December 20, 2024

Wendy Gorski



**RE: National Register of Historic Places Eligibility of Bolton Primary School,  
5933 Holmes Street, West Linn, Clackamas County, Oregon**

Dear Ms. Gorski:

Thank you for your interest in listing Bolton Primary School (5933 Holmes Street, West Linn) in the National Register of Historic Places. Based on the photographs, research materials, and general information included in your submittal, we believe that this property is potentially eligible for nomination to the National Park Service for individual listing in the National Register.

The information provided indicates that Bolton Primary School is potentially eligible for the National Register under Criterion A, in the area of Education, for its association with the formation of the West Linn School District and for its illustration of the post-war educational history of West Linn. Conveying the history of public education in your community and placing this school within the larger context of the area's post-war educational development will be important to supporting this argument. Describing trends in post-war educational development across West Linn and in nearby communities and comparing Bolton School to other extant schools constructed and expanded in this period will be necessary to establish the comparative significance of the school within the local context.

Bolton School may also be eligible under Criterion C, in the area of Architecture, if research indicates that the school was specifically constructed to meet professional standards for school design that characterized the post-war era. To make this argument, please refer to resources that detail the fundamental design principles for schools during this era, such as Amy Ogata's "[Building for Learning in Postwar American Elementary Schools](#)" in the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* (December 2008) and William Caudill's *Toward Better School Design* (1954). Contemporary rhetoric around Bolton School's design, construction, and later expansions may also provide information as to whether its design was intentionally aligned with the popular principles of post-war educational design.

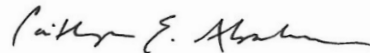
Finally, any argument for Bolton School's eligibility will need to account for the various changes that have occurred to the building and the surrounding property. Research may indicate that some of the additions are part of the property's significance story, under one or both of the criteria identified above. More recent additions and alterations will need to be examined and

evaluated for their impact on the school's *integrity*, or its ability to convey its significance based on the relationship between its physical features and its historic context.

The next step in this process is to contact the West Linn-Wilsonville School District to discuss plans to nominate the property, and to arrange a call or meeting with me to discuss your nomination strategy, the application form and technical resources, and important submittal deadlines. As you begin the process, please familiarize yourself with the National Park Service publications [How to Complete the National Register Registration Form](#) and [How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation](#), keeping in mind that the National Park Service has specific documentation and format requirements. On average, nominations require between 100 and 150 hours of preparation and up to a year to complete the process of official listing.

Thank you again for your interest in the National Register and in preserving Oregon's historic buildings. We look forward to working with you and to learning more about the history and significance of Bolton School as your project progresses!

Sincerely,



Caitlyn E. Abrahms

National Register Program Coordinator

(503) 201-0454

[Caitlyn.Abrahms@opr.d.oregon.gov](mailto:Caitlyn.Abrahms@opr.d.oregon.gov)