

West Woodland

Name:	West Woodland Elementary School	Enrollment:	328
Address:	5601 4th Avenue NW	Nickname:	Wildcats
Configuration:	K-5	Colors:	Blue and orange



West Woodland, 2000 ©Mary Randlett SPSA 281-10

Name: **West Woodland School**
 Location: 5634 5th Avenue NW
 Building: 3-story, 9-room brick
 Architect: Edgar Blair
 Site: 2.14 acres

1910: Opened; named on January 10
 1912: Site expanded
 1913: Addition (Blair)
 1925: Addition (Floyd A. Naramore)
 1972: Remodeled
 1989: Closed in June; site expanded to 3.8 acres
 1990: Demolished in April

A small wood-framed portable school opened in 1905, on leased land near the base of the west side of Phinney Ridge at (N)W 58th Street and 3rd Avenue NW. Ross Annex housed the overflow of students from Ross School and served grades 1–2 exclusively.

E. James Brower, a settler on the west side of Phinney Ridge, notified the Seattle School Board that older children in his neighborhood were attending five different schools. To get to Ross School, children had to walk on a trail, complete with planks across muddy spots, through the woods north of (then) W 45th street. Others had to go west on an elevated plank walkway over a swamp to reach Irving School in Ballard. Some walked up the hill to Allen School, while the rest went to Day and Whittier. In response, the district purchased land from Mr. Brower for a new permanent school in summer 1908. The Ross Annex portable was moved onto the new site at 4th Avenue NW and (N)W 56th Street and reopened in September 1908. The new school, opened in January 1910, took its name from that of the community, which derived from a shortening of “west of Woodland Park”. West Woodland School’s Jacobean-style architecture resembled other schools built at the same time, especially Muir and Gatewood. Some of the bricks came from the old Lawton School following its demolition.

Most of the teachers reached the school by the Phinney streetcar. They walked along a sandy path, which, in season, was bordered by lupine and roses, and came down the hill through the woods. Upon opening, the school was crowded with classes of over 40 pupils. Some students were asked to transfer back to their former schools.



West Woodland, ca. 1940 SPSA 281-6

The site was enlarged in 1912 with the purchase of six lots. The following year, eight more classrooms, a meeting room, and a manual training room were added to the north side. Community growth continued and soon portables were added.

In 1925, the portables were removed when the original plan for the school was completed with the addition of seven more classrooms, a kindergarten room, two playcourts, and a lunchroom-meeting room on the south side. West Woodland was the largest elementary school in the city in 1929–30, with 1,024 students.

The 8th grade students were transferred to Hamilton or Monroe in September 1941. During World War II, a “semi-permanent” nursery school building was erected on the southeast corner of the grounds to accommodate preschool children whose mothers were working in war industries. This structure later served as a kindergarten room, then a daycare center.

The 7th graders left in 1949–50 to attend junior high schools, bringing the enrollment down to 930. The reduced enrollment did not last long, however, as West Woodland’s school population climbed to 1,172 in 1958–59. Enrollment peaked at 1,202 in the mid-1960s, making West Woodland one of the district’s largest elementary schools. By then, the small playground was completely covered with portables. In 1972, two basement rooms were converted into a learning resource center and the auditorium was remodeled to include gymnasium facilities.

West Woodland was not included in the desegregation plan, which paired elementary schools, and therefore it remained K–6 during the 1970s and 1980s.

Name: **West Woodland
Elementary School**
 Location: 5601 4th Avenue NW
 Building: 20-room structural steel
 frame with brick veneer
 Architect: Olson Sundberg Architects
 Site: 3.8 acres

1991: Opened



West Woodland, 1960 SPSA 281-5

By fall 1986, parents were raising concerns about the size and safety of the old structure. The school board considered three options for a new facility: “squeezing” a new building onto the small site, expanding the site or trying to acquire Gilman Playfield from the Seattle Parks Department. In the end, the site was enlarged by purchasing a row of houses to the west for the playground area.

During construction of the new school in 1989–91, classes were held at Monroe. The new building opened in 1991. It is smaller than the 1910 structure, but the playground is larger.