

# OLD PROSPECT POINT SCHOOL

**The first school building was the wooden, two-room Abbott School, followed in 1910 by a large, two-story brick building with a spiral fire escape. This building, along with its 1950 additions, was replaced by the current school in 1970.**

Prospect Point began as its own school district in the old two-room Abbott school building in 1904. The Abbott School was sold to the Falbo family in 1910, who erected a house on its foundation, just east of the school.

In the same year, a new two-story brick building was constructed, to which a spiral fire escape was added in 1923. In 1912, a nearby church building was also moved to the school grounds to house a cafeteria, classrooms, and a stage. In 1950, a bond election approved the construction of an addition to the main building, consisting of two classrooms, a gymnasium, and multipurpose rooms.

The origins of the elementary school at Prospect Point date to the 1890s, when it became clear to area residents that existing facilities were too crowded.

Originally named Prospect Heights, the area soon became known as Prospect Point. In 1904, members of the Prospect Point community resolved to split off from the Berney School District, and filed a petition requesting the creation of District #73 on all of the Ransom Clark Donation Claim. Clark had settled on the land in the 1850s, and died in 1859, leaving his property to his wife, Lettice, who later married H. A. Reynolds, a prominent landholder in the Prospect Point area, and founder of the first flour mill in Walla Walla located just southwest of the school along Yellowhawk Creek.

The new school district grew rapidly, and in 1910 the school board conducted a formal vote to build a new school and sell the Abbott schoolhouse. The large new Prospect Point School opened its doors in November, the new building located just northeast of the current playground at the corner of Howard & Reser.

In 1912, the school board purchased a nearby Methodist Church and moved it to the school grounds. The white structure, known as "The Little Building," housed the cafeteria and first and second grades, as well as a stage.

In 1950, a bond election authorized construction of additional facilities, including two classrooms, restrooms, locker space, and an all-purpose room with a stage that included a kitchen and cafeteria.

The fifties were the "Golden Years" of the Old Prospect Point. After a close vote leading to consolidation with District #140, Prospect Point held its last eighth grade graduation in 1959, after which new seventh and eighth-graders attended Garrison. The period from 1904 to 1959 was fueled by a decidedly independent outlook of the Prospect Point community that had motivated the school and made it a success.

Many area residents had long realized that the Old School, with its wood construction, downstairs boiler for central heating, and narrow stairwells, was a fire hazard. A District #140 committee also concluded the current structure was incompatible with modern teaching techniques and innovations. After approval of a \$1,155,000 bond issue for construction in 1968, planning began for a new school that would be quite different from all previous schools in the Walla Walla Valley, including open floor plans, movable walls, carpeting, and earth-tone color schemes.

In June 1969, a crew began tearing down the old Prospect Point School that had stood since 1910, along with its newer additions. School officials saved three landmarks from the old structure: the bell, the sign and, of course, the fire escape, which had been host to many fire drills in which older students and teachers caught the spiraling younger children at the bottom of the slide. After demolition, the fire escape was remounted and served for several more years on the school playfield as a combination landmark and slide.

With Reser Road rerouted to accommodate a four-building complex, a new Prospect Point School opened for the 1970-71 school year.



The 1910 building with 1950 addition



The old merry-go-round



The Little Building

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More information on Prospect Point School and other historic sites in the Walla Walla area is available online at [www.ww2020.net/historic-sites](http://www.ww2020.net/historic-sites).