The expansion and renovation of **Webster School** restored education within a quiet corner of a Ballard neighborhood.

Completed in 2020, the design and construction process involved partial building demolition; modernization of classrooms, hallways, library and cafeteria space; conversion of an underutilized daylight basement into administration, offices and additional meeting and learning space; and the introduction of a new activities wing that beckons shared community use. By restoring Webster's legacy of learning, its tenant, Licton Springs K-8, can better serve its diverse student community through offering curriculum based on Native experiences, cultures and historical perspectives.

BUILDING HISTORY:

At the turn of the 19th century, Ballard's thriving waterfront population was fueled by canning, fishing, sawmill and boat-building industries. Webster School opened in 1908, just as the then-independent City formally joined Seattle. The school, a brick and cast-stone structure designed by Frederick Sexton, located two levels of classrooms over a ground level of support space.

In the 30's, the building was enlarged by an L-shaped addition designed by a second prominent, local architect, Floyd Naramore. The introduction of a double-height dining room, library and more classrooms included a low play-court leg that obscured much of the north side.

Following building closure in the 70's — then later a fire — Webster was readied for use in the 80's by the Nordic Heritage Museum. Incremental tenant improvements ensued across the following four decades.

Fast forward to more recent times when, parallel with the museum's relocation strategy, Seattle Public Schools initiated plans to recommission Webster for District use. Yet re-conversion of the newly landmarked building would require extensive code-driven upgrades, repairs resultant of deferred maintenance, protection of historically significant elements and more learning space.

CHALLENGES OVERCOME:

Established physical accessibility across the building and site. Nested tightly among established residences, the relatively flat 1.55-acre site sat positioned upon a grade sloping gently to the southeast. Lined by overgrown trees, narrow perimeter streets conflicted with a need for increased vehicle circulation and parking. High above the public way, the school's original split-level front entrance led to an interior labyrinth of hallways and stairs that connected offset floor plates.

A new north-facing front entrance and centrally-located elevator now offers direct adjacency to accessible parking, a clear path of approach, and mobility throughout the building. The former main entry is still available as a drop-off point for students not requiring accessibility.

Sited and massed a large addition, a tight fit between the school and adjacent park.

Created a welcoming, inclusive learning environment while honoring the formality of the original architecture. Earning approval by the City's Landmarks Preservation Board represented only one facet of an extensive permitting process. As part of this, a process of iterative study refined the compatibility of the new addition; demonstrated the approach for restoration vs replacement of windows; set the bounds of the work within 6 historically-significant interior spaces; and defined landscape improvements to correct decades of overgrowth while protecting a cherished "Matsuda" cherry tree that stands as a symbol of perseverance, acceptance and endurance.

Met the $26m budget. Funds were carefully allocated to address the highest priority needs, resulting in a refreshing space able to provide functional, adaptable educational use throughout the next century.

CLIENT OBJECTIVES AND INTERACTION:

It was midway through construction that Licton Springs K-8 (LSK8) was confirmed as the tenant by the District. In the absence of a designated user group during programming and design, District-level representatives served as the by-proxy project advocates. Dozens of teaching, library and health specialists — along with security, equipment, maintenance and IT staff — engaged in collaborative conversations to address scenarios for day-to-day operations, building and site security, safe and equitable access to toilet facilities and how to encourage shared community use. (Upon confirmation of LSK8 as building user, modifications to the science and art rooms were among the few adaptations requested.) During outreach events, topics of traffic impacts and the overall suitability of the school's design, represented participant concerns, which helped maintain focus on preserving human scale and walkability.

The environment supports the curriculum. As a Kindergarten through 8th grade program with a small but growing population of students, Licton Springs was in search of a "just right" place they could call home. The integration of historic and contemporary spaces has proven to be a great fit. The compact building keeps students close to one another (a valuable scenario outside of a pandemic), while the 3-story layout provides appropriate separation between different grade levels. Small classrooms and large group areas are valuable to a small specialty school; the commons and music, art and science classrooms further broaden the range of learning areas for students. During construction, and per the request of the Principal, the science room was integrated into the design to further support the Licton Springs curriculum.

The environment supports a variety of learning and teaching styles. Webster contains a mix of traditional classrooms; shared learning areas directly outside — and visible from — classrooms; unique and fun seating options directly off circulation areas; small group learning areas; performance space; and specialty learning areas. The variety of space types offers a place to appeal to every learner.

The historic classroom spaces are smaller than a typical contemporary model, offering a more intimate setting for learning. Large open flex spaces provide break-out or large group opportunities.

The environment is adaptable and flexible. Having functioned as a school in its early life, a museum for 40 years, and now a school once again, Webster itself is a model of adaptability and flexibility.

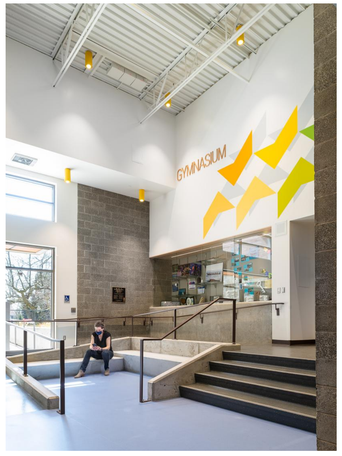
While the existing building's structure dictated the floor plan, it is adaptable to elementary, middle, or even specialty high school programming through a change in layout, furniture and equipment. Standardized core learning areas are easily adaptable to middle school needs.

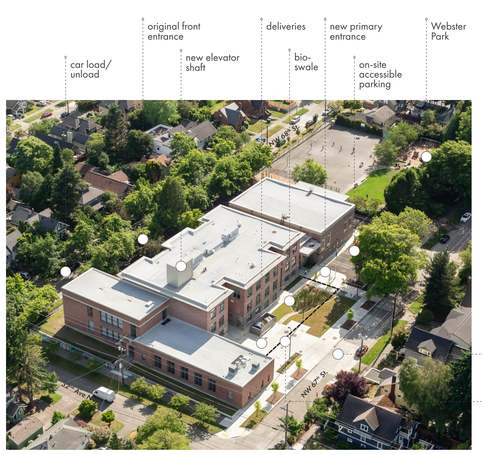
SUSTAINABILITY:

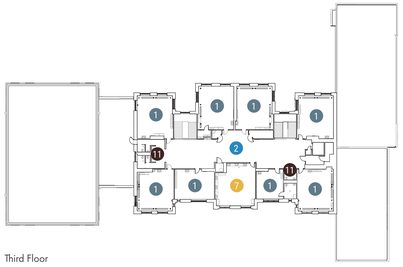
Renovation of the historic building brought increased emphasis on saving doors, windows, finishes and other materials to a level beyond a typical modernization. This resulted in substantial resource conservation. New mechanical, electrical, plumbing and low voltage components, tied together into an energy management system, work efficiently — and on demand — inside the densely-insulated building envelope. Boasting a projected EUI of 29, Webster is designed to perform 24% better than a Seattle Energy Code baseline building. Further, by meeting requirements of the Washington Sustainable Schools Protocol (a self-certifying system modeled to parallel LEED Silver), as well as those for the Seattle Energy Code (among the most robust in the nation), Webster is built to last effectively and efficiently for another 100 years, seeking balance between lightened resource consumption, ease of operations and occupant physical comfort, to reduce its overall impact on the environment.

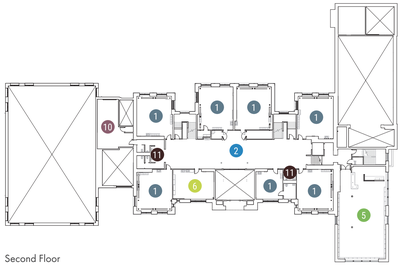
ACHIEVEMENT:

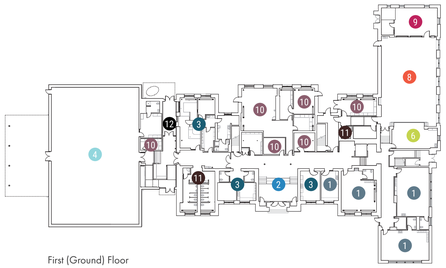
The renovation and expansion of Webster School extends the life of a neighborhood icon. Above all, it gives Seattle Public Schools and LSK8 a place to offer expanded views of history and education, upon a building and site that engages students, families and citizens of greater Seattle in celebrating Ballard's multi-cultural history.











"For the first time since 1969, our school has its own building. For a school that has been moved 5+ times, having a permanent home that is not shared with others means a lot. That it is new and beautiful means even more. Our school serves a majority of Students of Color Furthest From Educational Justice, so housing our school in such an amazing building definitely enhances our students' access to equitable education and communicates to students that they are important."

- Emily Butler, LSK8 Principal

Site Size
1.55 acres

Building Size
44,800 sf, renovated
7,700 sf, new

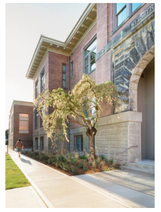
Student Capacity
400 - 450

Grades Served
Kindergarten - 8th

Cost
$26.2M MACC

LEGEND

1. Core Instruction
2. Shared Learning
3. Administration / Staff Support
4. Gymnasium / Activities
5. Library
6. Music / Art
7. Science
8. Commons / Dining
9. Kitchen
10. Building Support / Storage
11. Restrooms
12. Hyphen



WEBSTER SCHOOL RENOVATION
FOR LICTON SPRINGS K-8
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

Owner: Seattle Public Schools
Architect: TCF Architecture
GC/CM: BNBuilders
Civil Engineer: LPD Engineering
Landscape Architect: Berger Partnership
Structural Engineer: PCS Structural Solutions
Mechanical Engineer: Metrix Engineers
Electrical Engineer/Telecomm: Hargis Engineers
Acoustics: BRC Acoustics
Food Service: Clevenger Associates

Hardware: Gordon Adams
Historic Consultant: Artifacts, Inc.
Cost Estimator: The Robinson Company
Building Envelope: Allana Buick & Bers
Surveyor: Pace Engineers
Geotech: Associated Earth Sciences
Hazardous Materials: PBS Engineering & Environmental
Materials Lab: Otto Rosenau & Associates
Commissioning Agent: Engineering Economics, Inc.

TCF A