

## Cedar Park

The Lake City area had only one elementary school prior to the early 1950s. Suddenly, there was a critical need for space as the student population grew at an alarming rate. The Shoreline School District constructed two portable schools (South Haller Lake and Matthews) in 1953 and one permanent school (Olympic Hills) in 1954. However, the classroom shortage in Lake City was yet to be resolved when the area was annexed into Seattle in 1954. More classrooms were needed, and they were needed quickly.

The Seattle School District bought a 4.38 acre site in 1955 and began to set up an all-portable school as an annex to Lake City School. Inexpensive and relatively quick to install, it was viewed as a temporary solution until funds for a permanent building were available, if the need continued in the surrounding area.

Scheduled to open in fall 1955, Cedar Park School finally opened in April 1956, at 3737 NE 135th Street, with five portables serving grades 1–3 from Lake City School. Early plans called for 8–10 portables housing grades K–6 in the second year, but only the 4th grade was added in September 1956. That November, Seattle voters approved a school bond measure, assuring construction of a permanent building. The following summer, two more portables were moved to the site to hold grades 5 and 6, bringing enrollment to 226. The school board officially adopted the name Cedar Park School in February 1957.

Construction of the new school began in spring 1958 on the east side of the property, and a large playfield was developed on the lower western half. Its contemporary design typified the new single-level, functional school buildings popular during this period. The classrooms were especially spacious, in stark contrast to the overcrowded rooms of the past, and the lunchroom-auditorium seated over 500 people. A gymnasium and a covered playcourt adjacent to the playground completed the facility.

The permanent school building opened in March 1959. The following September, it welcomed its own principal and cut its ties with Lake City School. In 1972, the library was remodeled and expanded by consolidating two classrooms.

Enrollment went from a high of 437 in 1968–69 to just 213 in 1976–77 when Cedar Park and Sand Point were paired with one principal and one librarian serving both schools. In spring 1980, Cedar Park became one of ten Seattle Public Schools to open a Newcomer Center to meet the special needs of the many Indo-Chinese students new to the school system. When the school closed in 1981, its 197 students were reassigned to two other schools with which it had been part of a triad for desegregation purposes: grades K–3 were sent to Rogers, while grades 4–6 went to Madrona.

After this closure, the district leased Cedar Park as an arts studio. Cedar Park Arts Center comprised a number of live-in arts studios, but their status was not made clear until 1994 when an agreement was reached with the district for a limit of nine at a time. Presently seven day-studios operate in the building, utilizing not only former classrooms, but also the auditorium, kitchen, teachers' conference room, and breezeway play area.



Cedar Park, ca. 1965 SPSA 210-6



Cedar Park, 1963 SPSA 210-4

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Name: **Cedar Park  
Elementary School**  
Location: 13224 37th Avenue NE  
Building: 11-room, 1-story precast  
cement  
Architect: Paul Thiry  
Site: 4.38 acres

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1959: Opened in March as annex  
to Lake City  
1960: Became independent school  
in September  
1976: Paired with Sand Point  
School  
1981: Closed in June  
1982: Leased to the Cedar Park  
Arts Center

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Following the 1994 agreement and in order to establish a peaceful relationship with other neighborhood residents, the western half of the property is being developed into Cedar Park, which will be leased to the Seattle Parks Department under a long-term agreement. This development will give the Lake City area a park east of Lake City Way, providing recreational space similar to that offered by the park west of the former Lake City School.



Cedar Park, 1963 SPSA 210-5