

## Emerson Street

Emerson Street was named to honor Andrew L Emerson, Portland's first mayor in 1832. The street was laid out from Congress to Turner Street in 1868 and then extended to Melbourne Street in 1892. The Emerson Street School was also named in his honor.

### ***Architectural Character of the Street***

Three blocks long, Emerson Street is dominated by the brick Colonial Revival Emerson School between Congress and Turner Streets. The street is mainly comprised of one-and-a-half story dwellings that are primarily three bays wide. Most of these dwellings rest on high brick or block foundations. There are also several examples of triple decker apartment buildings with flat roofs, most also set on high brick or block foundations. The dwellings are generally set back from the sidewalk, although Nos. 22 and 46 are set well back onto their lots. While front gable dwellings predominate, there are examples of side gables. Entrances are generally on the street façade, although there are examples of primary entrances on the side facades. Parking, where provided, is accommodated in narrow driveways to the side of a dwelling. Landscape features like fences and stone retaining walls are present on the south side of the street. There is an excellent example of a three-bay garage near the intersection with Quebec Street. Between Turner and Quebec Street are several dwellings built in the mid-20th century.

**Address:** 13 Emerson Street  
**Approximate/Documented Date of Building:** 1898  
**Surveyed:** December 2018  
**Historic Name:** Emerson School. Frederick A. Tompson, Architect  
**Contributing or Noncontributing:** Landmark



**Introduction:**

The former school building on Emerson Street exhibits features of the popular Queen Anne style and the emerging Colonial Revival style. From the Queen Anne style, the school expresses decorative window panes in the trio of third floor windows above the entry and wall texture variations achieved by the patterning of the brick courses, brick panels, and granite lintels and sills. It retains several character defining features of the Colonial Revival style including its heavily elaborated entrance, modillion decorated cornice, hip roof, and symmetrical façade.

Emerson School at 13 Emerson Street on Munjoy Hill opened in 1898 in order to accommodate the growing population of students living on Munjoy Hill. It was named for Portland's first mayor, Andrew L. Emerson and designed by Frederick A. Tompson. The school was closed in the late 1970s and converted to use as housing in the 1980s. The former school is now part of the Munjoy Commons housing complex, along with the former Shailer School at 56 North Street, owned by Avesta.

**Current Architectural Description:**

The three by three bay brick building rests on a rectangular granite foundation and has a symmetrical plan. The building is two stories high with a raised basement level. The recessed main entry on Emerson Street is two-stories in height and features Ionic columns on a pedestal base supporting a brick arch.

Above the pair of entry doors is a terra cotta panel with a pair of wreaths flanking the following inscription:

“Emerson School  
In Memory of  
Andrew Emerson  
First Mayor of Portland”

Rows of 1/1 double hung sash windows have been altered by the infill of some windows. The second floor windows have continuous brick jack arch lintels and continuous granite sill, while the first floor windows have a continuous granite lintel and sill.

The building lot slopes downhill toward Morning Street, exposing an entire a full story at the basement level. Driveways to the north and south of the former school lead to the rear of the site. At the rear is a large paved parking lot approximately five to six feet above the sidewalk along Morning Street.

**Additions and Alterations Since 1924:**

The roofline has been altered by the removal of original dormers and a tower and the addition of skylights, inverted dormers and balconies. As mentioned above, some windows have been infilled for the building’s new use, but the brick infill was set back in the masonry opening in a manner that allows the original window opening to be observed. Although altered the building retains most of its character defining details, contributes to the neighborhood’s architectural character, and is an important physical example of the social history of Munjoy Hill.

