

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a).**

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name McKerrow, Helen W., School

Other names/site number Deiter, John, Center

## 2. Location

street & number 4800 Collingwood St.  not for publication

city or town Detroit  vicinity

State Michigan code MI county Wayne code 163 zip code 48204

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

national  statewide  local

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Michigan State Historic Preservation Officer  
Title

Michigan State Historic Preservation Office  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

## 4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

entered in the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

determined eligible for the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

determined not eligible for the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

removed from the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

**Category of Property**  
(Check only **one** box)

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	private
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	public - Federal
<input type="checkbox"/>	private

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

<u>Contributing</u>	<u>Noncontributing</u>	
1		buildings
		sites
		structures
		Objects
		buildings
1	0	<b>Total</b>

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**

Public Schools of Detroit

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/school

**Current Functions**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

EDUCATION/school

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

Romanesque

Other: Arts and Crafts

**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Concrete

walls: Brick

Stone: Limestone

roof: Asphalt

other: Stone

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### **Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

#### **Summary Paragraph**

Helen W. McKerrow School faces south onto Collingwood Avenue, between Yellowstone Avenue on the west, Burlingame Avenue on the north, and Cascade Avenue on the east, on the near northwest side of Detroit, approximately five miles from downtown. The school building occupies the southern half of its block-long site, the rest of it occupied by a parking lot along Yellowstone Avenue and a playfield. It is a brown and red brick, flat roofed, two-story building with masonry trim in the Neo Romanesque style. Its main feature is the entrance tower with a pyramidal roof. The school remains largely unaltered, except for its replacement windows.

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### **Narrative Description**

McKerrow School is almost square in plan. At its Collingwood Avenue façade, an ample front yard, approximately eighty feet deep, is interrupted by a pair of curved walkways that meet at the central portico, entered at grade. In the circular area between the walkways is more grass turf and a flagpole. The school building occupies almost all of the width of its lot; the side yards contain shallow grass lawns.

McKerrow School is two stories tall, is covered with a flat roof with tile coping, and is faced with Flemish bond brick and Indiana limestone trim. Its front façade is symmetrical; the entrance tower and the end bays project from the four bays of regularly arranged triple window groupings per floor. Ornament is focused on the entrance tower, its entrance opening consisting of a brick compound archway with stone surrounds and stone tympanum bearing the Seal of the State of Michigan. Below is an inscription panel containing the words, "HELEN W MCKERROW" and "AD SCHOOL 1926." Impost blocks with reliefs of open books and floral detail of rosettes and vines surround the entrance opening.

At second story level of the entrance tower is a grouping of three elongated windows separated by two columns, one with a stylized spiral pattern and the other with a stylized chevron pattern, with smooth piers at the sides of the grouping, all with acanthus and rosette embellished capitals. Reliefs in the two outer tympanums bear depictions of a lamp of knowledge; that in the middle is a sphere. The wall surface above is embellished with basketweave brickwork and arcading. Above the roofline on three sides of the tower, sandwiched between a leaf-molded course and an egg-and-dart cornice, are three framed, masonry panels, the outer two filled with curvilinear forms overlaid with a diamond form, and the center one filled with a diamond with a depiction of an open book. The tower rises to small brackets beneath the overhang of the copper gutters, culminating in a pyramidal roof. The zigzag or chevron course beginning at the level of the second story arches on the tower bay continues as a lintel course throughout the rest of the façade. More blind arcading ornaments the blank walls of the end bays of the front façade. The articulation of the side elevations is very similar to the front, but somewhat simpler.

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1926-1927

**Significant Dates**

1926, 1927

**Significant Person**

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Verner, Wilhelm & Molby

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The period of significance includes the dates of construction.

**Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)**

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

Helen McKerrow School is locally significant under National Register *Criterion C* for its architecture, which combines Romanesque motifs with an Arts and Crafts feeling. It was designed in 1926 by Verner, Wilhelm & Molby, a Detroit architectural firm that was responsible for at least four Detroit public school buildings from the mid-1920s. The Detroit Board of Education expanded its contracting practices to include a variety of architects after the death of William Higginbotham, partner in the architectural practice of Malcomson & Higginbotham, in 1923.

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance)

Helen W. McKerrow School opened in September, 1927. It was named after Helen W. McKerrow (1858-1925), a Scottish immigrant who worked for many years as a Detroit teacher and principal. The building was located on land costing \$164,530, and was constructed at a cost of \$372,310. Rather than being constructed in units, the building was built all at once. The school opened in 1927 to an enrollment of 1,750 students in kindergarten through eighth grade until the opening of Tappan and Durfee Intermediate Schools, at which time the seventh and eighth grades were transferred there. The school's enrollment declined to about 800 in 1950, but by 1961 increased to 1,845. Until 1931, this building served as a Detroit Teachers College training school.

McKerrow School was designed in 1926 by Verner, Wilhelm & Molby. William F. Verner resided in Ann Arbor, and partnered with Eugene B. Wilhelm in 1920. Frank Molby, formerly with Albert Kahn, Inc., later joined the firm, which then became Verner, Wilhelm and Molby. Molby began the practice of architecture in Washington, D.C. in 1892 where, for sixteen years, he was in the office of the supervising architect of the Treasury before arriving in Detroit. The other Detroit schools by Verner, Wilhelm and Molby are Foch and Washington Schools (1924) and Coolidge School (1925). The Redford Theater (1927), listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1985, and St. Matthias Episcopal Church are two other buildings in Detroit by the firm.

**Developmental history/additional historic context information** (if appropriate)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography** (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other
- Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): \_\_\_\_\_

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### 10. Geographical Data

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**Acreage of Property** 6.29  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

#### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>17</u> Zone	<u>234444</u> Easting	<u>4693462</u> Northing	3	<u>          </u> Zone	<u>          </u> Easting	<u>          </u> Northing
2	<u>          </u> Zone	<u>          </u> Easting	<u>          </u> Northing	4	<u>          </u> Zone	<u>          </u> Easting	<u>          </u> Northing

**Verbal Boundary Description** (describe the boundaries of the property)

E YELLOWSTONE 9 THRU 12 BLK 38 1 THRU 20 BLK 43 1 THRU 20 BLK 46 EXC COLLINGWOOD AVE & EXC BURLINGAME AVE AS OP RAVENSWOOD SUB L10 P81 PLATS, W C R 14/179

**Boundary Justification** (explain why the boundaries were selected)

The boundaries described above include the entire parcel historically associated with McKerrow School.

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### 11. Form Prepared By

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name/title Deborah M. Goldstein  
organization City of Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board date March 25, 2009  
street & number CAYMC, 2 Woodward Avenue, Suite 204 telephone (313) 224-3487  
city or town Detroit state MI zip code 48226  
e-mail cc-historic@detroitmi.gov

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### Additional Documentation

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Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.  
A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

McKerrow, Helen W., School

Name of Property

Wayne, MI

County and State

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**Photographs:**

Submit clear and descriptive black and white photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

See continuation sheet.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Section number 9

Page 1

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**Bibliography**

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Polk, R. L. *Detroit City Directory*. Detroit: R. L. Polk & Company, 1914.

Sanborn Map Company. *Detroit, Mich.* Vol. 15, Sheet 11. Pelham, NY: Sanborn Map Company, 2003.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet**

Section number 10 Page 1

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**Photographs**

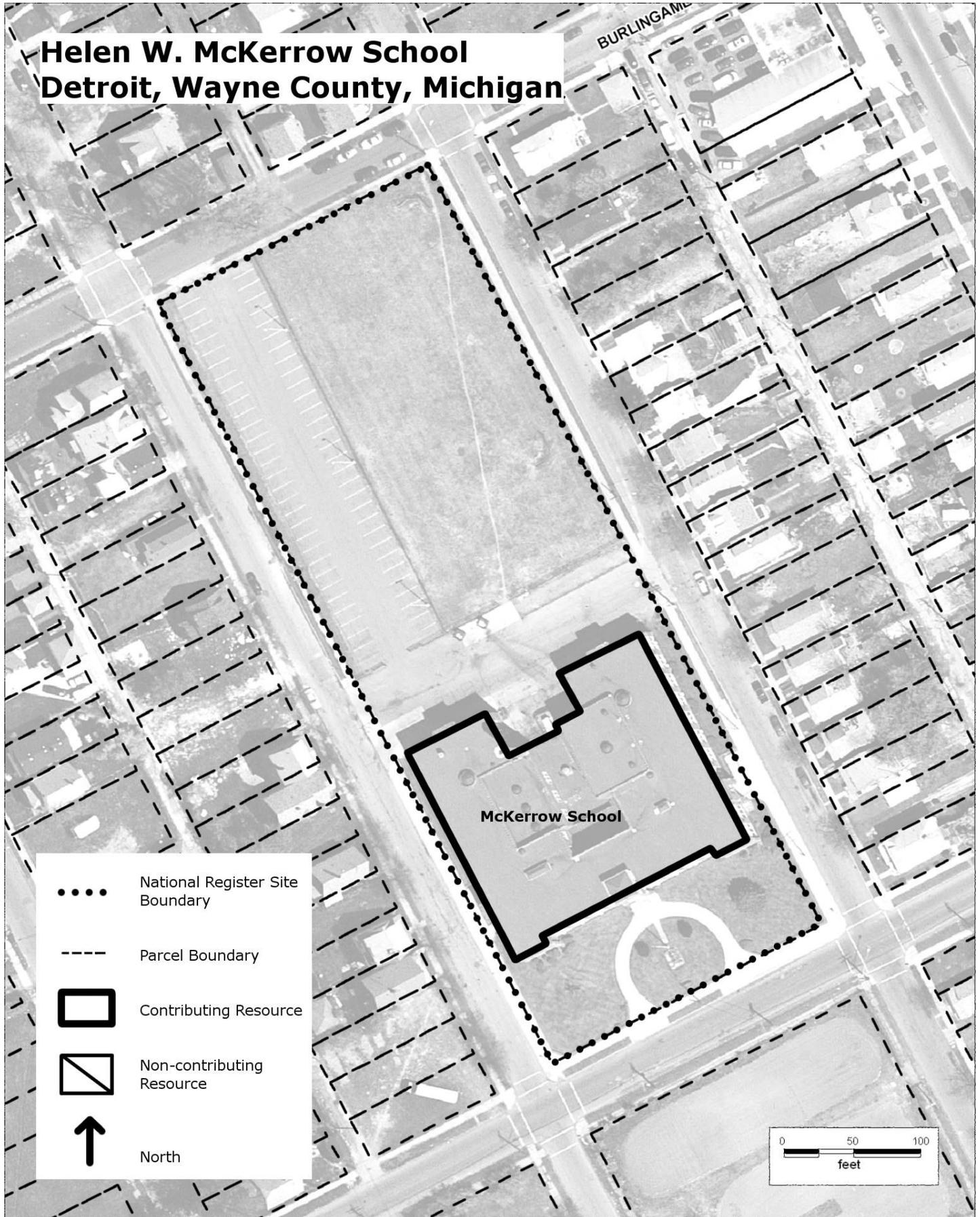
Photographer: Timothy Boscarino

Date: November 2008

Paper and Ink: HP Premium Plus Glossy Photo Paper, HP Vivera Ink

1. South (Collingwood) elevation.  
(MI\_Wayne\_McKerrowSch0001.tif)
2. South elevation.  
(MI\_Wayne\_McKerrowSch0002.tif)
3. Main entrance on south elevation.  
(MI\_Wayne\_McKerrowSch0003.tif)

# Helen W. McKerrow School Detroit, Wayne County, Michigan



McKerrow, Helen W., School

Name of Property

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Wayne, MI

County and State

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