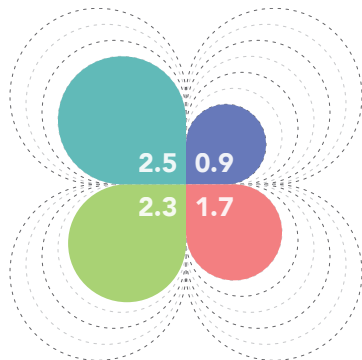


# 5 Stephens

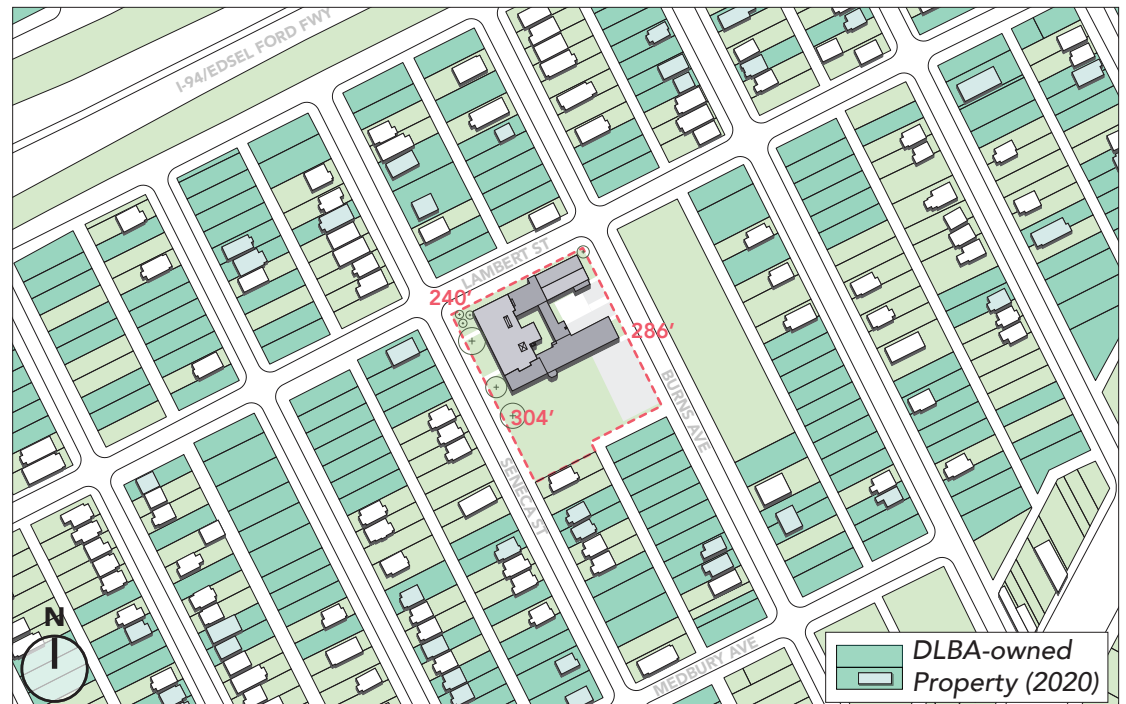


Address: 5974 Seneca  
Parcel: 17006774  
District: 5  
SNF Area: n/a  
Owner: City of Detroit  
Site Area: 1.68 ac  
Gross Floor Area: 73,700 sf  
Floors: 4  
Plan Type: U  
School Type:  
Year Built: 1913, 1917, 1921  
Zoned: R2  
Base Rehab Cost (est): \$2.1M  
Total Rehab Cost (est): \$15.6M

Condition Market



History Neighborhood



## Building Overview

4-story U-shaped building

Original building constructed in 1913 as a 3-story building with a stubby E-plan. A wood-framed open-air level was built on the roof at an unknown date; includes walk-out roof access with nice views.

Includes elevator (original? Likely not functional).

Raised, occupied basement; first floor raised above grade, so all entrances require stairs. Not ADA-accessible.

Two single-loaded classroom wings added in 1917 and 1921, respectively; similar architectural style as original.

Two courtyards provide light and air to interior of building. One courtyard is completely enclosed; second courtyard is open to the rear. Neither is accessible from inside, and both are paved or basement roof.

Gym and auditorium stacked; both shared entrances separate from rest of school.

Overall good condition; scrapped throughout and localized water damage.

## Neighborhood Overview

School located in Gratiot Town/Kettering neighborhood.

Surrounding residential blocks have large numbers of vacant lots and Land-Bank-owned properties.

Strong block clubs in the area and highly-engaged residents that are protective of the school. Neighbors on Seneca St. maintain the schoolyard for use as a park and block party venue.

School has a small parcel and not much open space, but adjacent to City-owned Burns-Lambert park, which includes a field and basketball court. Park does not seem well maintained.

Two blocks north of Gratiot Ave, a major radial artery with some businesses and quality bus service. Nearby stretch is mostly vacant but includes a small supermarket and a bakery/cafe.

Easy access to I-94 at Gratiot Ave and Van Dyke Ave.

Near former Kettering H.S. site, current site of new Dakota Integrated Systems plant.

## Development Overview

Opportunities:

- Historic building in good condition.
- Good layout with quality useable space.
- Rooftop penthouse/deck has panoramic views
- Engaged neighborhood
- Convenient location with good freeway and transit access.

Challenges

- Large building will be costly to rehab and maintain.

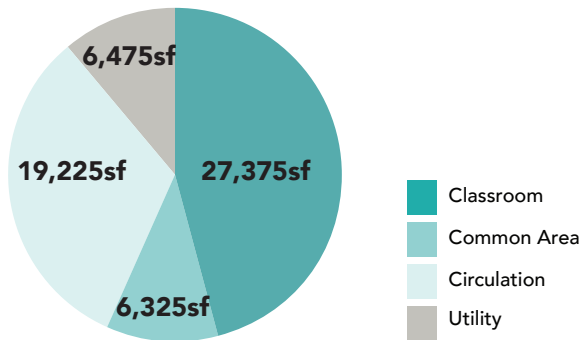
Real Estate Market summary: (1-mi radius, compared against subset of 39 City-owned vacant schools)

- Multifamily: Below Average
- Retail: Average
- Office: Below Average
- Industrial: Average

Market-based Use Recommendations

- Best market for multifamily due to high walkscore, below-average multifamily vacancy rate, and above-average rent.

## Existing Floorplan + Program



59,400 sf net floor area

### Structure

- Load-bearing brick masonry
- Concrete frame
- Wood frame (3rd floor)

### Roof System:

- Cast-in-place concrete slab
- Wood frame and deck (3rd floor)
- Modified Bitumen
- Internal roof drains and gutters

### Facade:

- Brick with limestone accents
- Wood windows replaced w/ aluminum

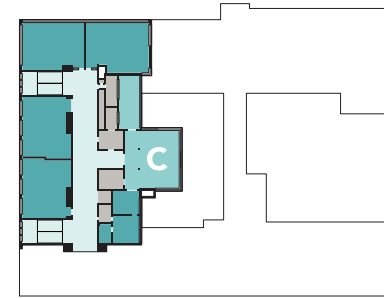
### Floor System:

- Concrete tee joist

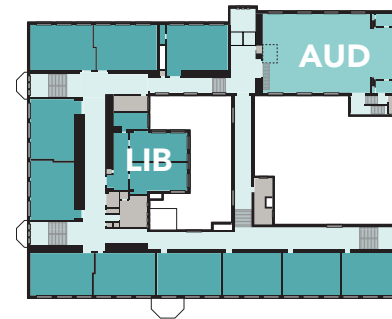
### Interior Walls:

- Plaster over brick/gypsum block

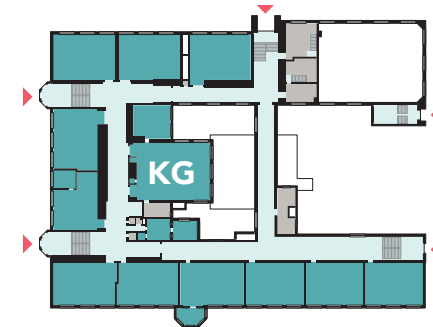
### Third Floor



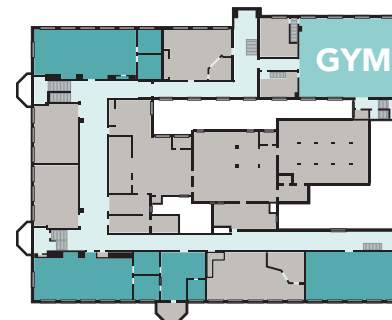
### Second Floor



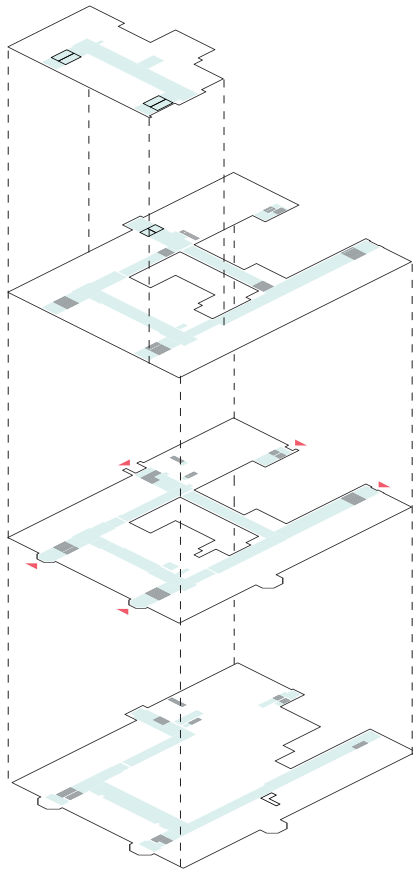
### First Floor



### Basement

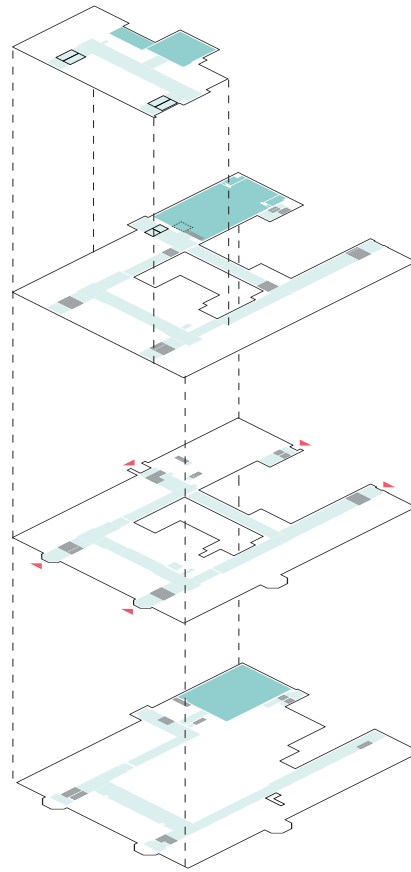


## Existing Floorplan + Program



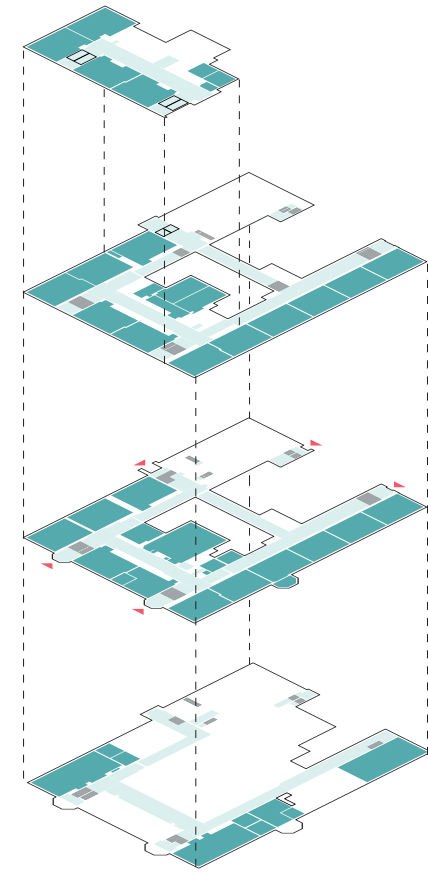
### Circulation

Circulation follows an irregular pattern throughout the building. In the original unit, all circulation is double-loaded, in an H-configuration. In later additions, the side wings were extended with single-loaded corridors with windows into the central courtyards. In 1921, a 2-story connector was built as a shortcut between the two side wings.



### Common Areas

Stephens features common areas on three levels. The gym is located in the basement, with attached 2-story locker rooms on the basement and first floors. The auditorium is stacked above the gym on the second floor. A small wood-framed cafeteria was added on the roof, featuring windows on three sides and views over the surrounding neighborhood.



### Classroom Areas

The school's 30 regular classrooms are arranged around the perimeter of the building. Basement-level classrooms are double-length spaces for specialty purposes. A large kindergarten and library extend into the central courtyard on the first and second floors, respectively.

Typical classrooms are 22x30' with ceiling heights ranging from 12'8" to 13'

## School History

### Albert L. Stephens School

Albert L. Stephens (1857-1926) donated the property for the school to the City of Detroit. Born in Romeo, Michigan in 1857, Stephens joined his father in the lumbering business until 1896, when he concentrated on his business interests in Detroit and elsewhere. Stephens was a friend and neighbor of Governor Hazen S. Pingree, former mayor of Detroit, and became a member of the Mackinac Island Park Commission, Detroit Water Board, and the Michigan Board for Feeble-minded and Epileptics.

Stephens School opened in September 1913 and, subsequently, two units were added. The first in 1917 contained an auditorium and gymnasium; the second in 1919 when enrollment reached its peak at approximately 1300 students. Already by 1930 there were eight vacant rooms because of a declining enrollment.

The second floor of the south wing of the east side unit was then dedicated to a school for deaf students, a center for special needs girls, and an open air unit with a sleeping porch. In 1935, there were approximately 600 students in

regular grades one through seven and kindergarten, fifty-five percent of which were American born of German parents, a reflection on the German population of the surrounding neighborhood. Sixty-four children occupied the six rooms of the school for the deaf; the special girls' center held eighty-nine girls and the open air unit had seventy children. Rooms for open air students were added on the third floor with open air sleeping porches. The school for the deaf was replaced with the new Detroit School for the Deaf built on the west side in the early 1960s.

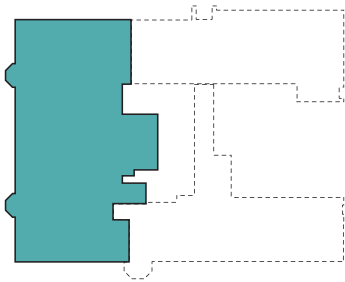
Stephens School was one of a group of schools built by Malcomson & Higginbotham to similar Arts and Crafts inspired designs where the patterns in the brickwork and the use of contrasting white bands of stone creates the decorative scheme. These include Burton School (1912) and Lincoln School (1916), which possess similar decorative features such as bricks with rounded edges and stone tablet-like name plates, but their architecture is primarily expressed in their simply and economically treated repetitive windows and unadorned blank walls. While the school board was concerned with expense, Malcomson &

Higginbotham ultimately convinced its members that a pleasant looking school could be commensurate in cost to a plain one.

Excerpted from United States Department of the Interior National Park Service National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (Draft). Stephens, Albert L., School. Goldstein, D., City of Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board (2009)

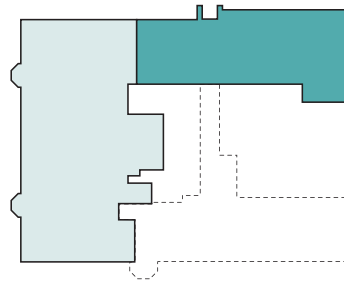


## Building Evolution



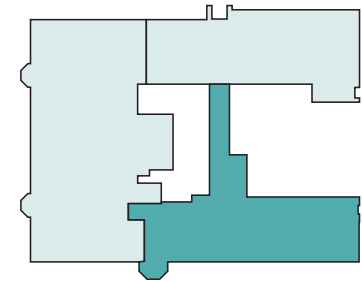
### Original Unit (1913)

The first school unit was a three-story block including a raised, occupied basement. The building included 14 classrooms, and large kindergarten and library. At some point, another open-air level was built on the roof of the original building.



### First Addition (1917)

In 1917, the northern wing was extended to add an auditorium and gymnasium. The gym occupied the basement, while the auditorium sat directly above it on the second floor. The addition also included three classrooms.



### Second Addition (1921)

In 1921, a single-loaded classroom wing was added to the south end of the building. The new wing included nine new classrooms and an auxiliary fan room. The addition also included a 2-story connector corridor linking the north and south wings. This wing also created a completely enclosed central courtyard and blocked off the view from the kindergarten and library.



North elevation looking east. The wood-framed penthouse addition is visible above the roof of the original building. The gym and auditorium are at far left.



The small school yard south of the school. The lot and playground are kept well-maintained by neighbors, who use it as a park and gathering place.



The small central courtyard only serves to allow natural light and ventilation. There is no access to this space, and the view is claustrophobic. The trees here are growing on the roof of the basement boiler rooms.



A small cafeteria occupies the center of a timber-framed penthouse added to the roof of the original school building. The penthouse has continuous windows around most of the perimeter and views across the neighborhood.





The large main kindergarten room protrudes into the central courtyard. Originally, these windows would have offered a view to the outside, but a two-story corridor connecting the north and south wings blocked off the view.



A typical classroom in good condition. Although the windows and radiators have been scrapped, the condition of the finishes is still good.



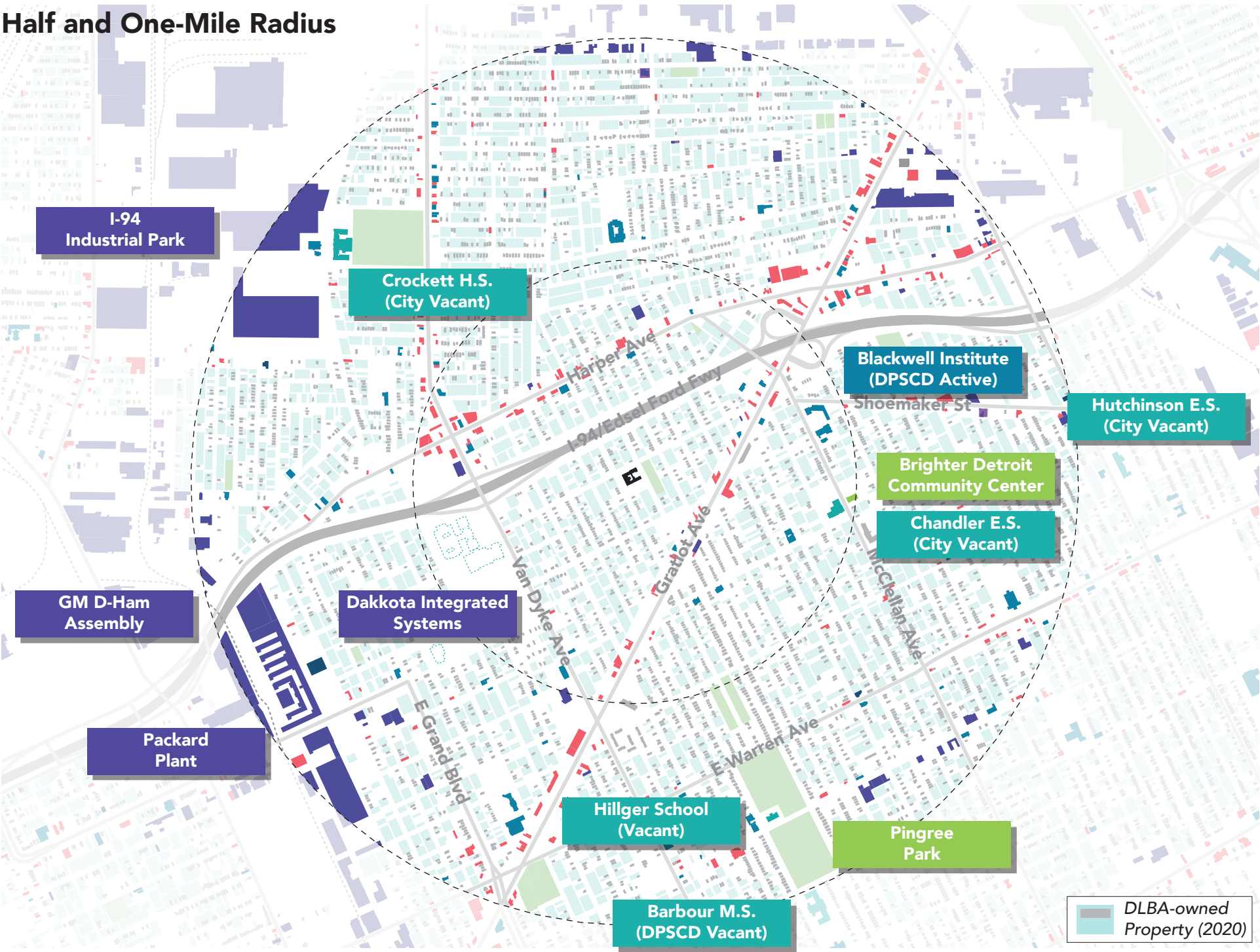
The auditorium and stage viewed from the small projection box. The auditorium has a flat floor and no fixed seating. The auditorium itself is not particularly large, but the generous stage give it a grand feel.



The gym is connected to the basement, but still has large windows all around.



# Half and One-Mile Radius



## Neighborhood By The Numbers

69<sub>/100</sub>

**Walkscore**  
Somewhat walkable

0.1<sub>mi</sub>

**Transit Access**  
Less than 5 minute walk to nearest  
DDOT Connect Ten or Key Route

0.4<sub>mi</sub>

**Freeway Access**  
Less than 5 minute drive  
to nearest freeway ramp

0.0<sub>mi</sub>

**Park Access**  
Adjacent to park (1+ acre)

2.1<sub>mi</sub>

**Nearest Recreation Center**  
No city rec center  
within walking distance

2.2<sub>mi</sub>

**Library Access**  
No public library  
within walking distance

65%

**Vacant/DLBA Property**  
High rate of vacancy  
within 0.25 mile radius (2020)

95

**Building Alteration Permits**  
Low construction activity  
within 1mi radius (2016-2018)

1.9%

**Senior Population Growth**  
Low projected growth  
within 1mi radius (2019-2024)