

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 Coffey, Wilford L., School

Other names/site number Coffey, Wilford L., Middle School

## 2. Location

street & number 17210 Cambridge Ave.  not for publication

city or town Detroit  vicinity

State Michigan code MI county Wayne code 163 zip code 48235

## 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 Michigan State Historic Preservation Office  
Title 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
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	public - Local
<input 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

Contributing	Noncontributing	
2	2	buildings
		sites
		structures
		Objects
		buildings
2	2	<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, Michigan

**6. Function or Use**

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

EDUCATION/school

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

EDUCATION/school

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**7. Description**

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

Late Gothic Revival

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**Materials**  
(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Concrete

walls: Brick

roof: Other

other: Stone; Metal

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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**

Wilford L. Coffey School occupies a full city block bounded by Gilchrist Avenue, Vassar Avenue, Lindsay Avenue, and Cambridge Avenue. It is located on Detroit's northwest side, about twelve miles northwest of downtown. While the northern half of the site is occupied by a parking lot and playfield, the school building is located on the southern half. It was constructed in 1925 as a small, single-story, four room school building. Although the original structure remains in more or less original condition, it was greatly expanded with a two-story addition built in 1956. The 1925 building is a modest, flat roofed brick structure with stone trim and a prominent, side-facing bay window. Its addition is similar to other Detroit school buildings designed in the 1950s, with continuous bands of glass block defining its otherwise brick-faced façades.

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### **Narrative Description**

The original Coffey School building, facing west onto Lindsay Avenue, features a prominent main entry flanked by blind walls, and is windowed on its north and south elevations. Its floor plan places two rooms on either side of a central corridor. The building is clad in orange, common-bond brickwork. The only major alteration to the building's façade is its modern aluminum and glass entranceway, consisting of a pair of double doors flanked by wide sidelights and surmounted by a transom. The doorway is several stone steps above grade, set within a thick, stone, round arch, and surmounted by a square stone panel depicting an open book. The entrance section is framed by shallow, buttress-like piers. It projects outward several feet from the plane of the façade's remaining wall surface, which consists of blind walls highlighted by upper and lower stone belt courses and framed by additional buttress-like piers. The building's windows, located on its side elevations, are historic, hinged, multi-pane metal windows. A large, five-faceted bay window, trimmed in stone, projects from the buildings south elevation.

A two story, flat-roofed addition was constructed in 1956, extending to the east and wrapping around to the south and west to give the final building an overall U-shaped footprint. The resulting building features a principal façades on Cambridge Avenue to the south, with secondary entrances on Lindsay Avenue to the west and serving a gymnasium and auditorium on Gilchrist Avenue to the east. The building is clad in orange brown, common bond brickwork. Continuous fenestration extends across a majority of the wall area; classroom windows are glass block on their upper two-thirds, while the lower third consists of transparent glass in hinged aluminum frames. A single story boiler room with smokestack projects from the building's northern elevation.

**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.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Architecture \_\_\_\_\_

Community Planning and Development \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1925 - 1956  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

1925, 1926, 1956  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**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.

**Period of Significance (justification)**

The Period of Significance begins with its construction by Redford Union Schools and concludes with the construction of its addition by the Detroit Board of Education.

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

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

Wilford L. Coffey School is locally significant under National Register *Criterion A* as an example of a small, neighborhood school built by Redford Union Schools prior to the annexation of that part of Redford Township by Detroit in 1926. It is additionally significant under *Criterion C* as a single-story, small scale school building erected for an exurban community. Its much larger, modern style addition from 1956 reflects the later expansion of the Old Redford part of the City of Detroit.

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

The four-room Coffey School opened in 1925 as an annex to Newton School. At the time, it was located within Redford Township and operated by Redford Union Schools. It was named for Wilford Larn Coffey, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and later, Dean of the Detroit City College.

The Redford Union School district also built Mettetal and Hubert elementary schools in the same year. They are amongst several smaller schools built in the townships, still far from the city center. Although the architect of Coffey School is unknown, the school districts acted independently in their hiring of architects, adding more variety to the Detroit system once annexed.

Coffey School was operated by the Detroit Board of Education starting in 1926, when the area was annexed by the growing city. Still, the area immediately surrounding the school lagged behind somewhat in its development. Coffey School closed in 1933 but reopened in 1936, with one room serving grades 1-3 while the remaining rooms provided space for sewing and manual arts classes for students of surrounding schools.

In 1942, as the surrounding community began to grow more rapidly, all four rooms were used for kindergarten and grade school instruction. Portable buildings were added in 1945 and 1953 to respond to increasing enrollment. From 1954 to 1956, the upper grades of the school were moved to Larned, Monnier, and Bow schools while an addition could be built.

This new addition, completed in the spring of 1956, and added eleven classrooms, two social studies rooms, two science rooms, a conservatory, an art room, a homemaking room, an auditorium, and a combination gymnasium and lunchroom with kitchen. The cost of this unit was \$975,662, and it now allowed the school to accommodate 1,085 students. By September of 1956, however, school enrollment had reached 1,246. In 1957, a portable classroom building was moved to the site.

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): \_\_\_\_\_

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 3.11  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1	<u>17</u> Zone	<u>317956</u> Easting	<u>4700113</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 LINDSAY 531 THRU 512 575 THRU 594 AND VAC ALLEY ADJ SAID LOTS HOMELANDS SUB L35 P12 PLATS, W C R 22/343

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

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

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**11. Form Prepared By**

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name/title Timothy Boscarino  
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)

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**Photographs:**

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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.

**Name of Property:**

**City or Vicinity:** Detroit

**County:** Wayne

**State:** MI

**Photographer:** Timothy Boscarino

**Date Photographed:**

**Description of Photograph(s) and number:**

1 of \_\_\_\_.

**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**

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### **Bibliography**

Detroit, City of, Board of Education. *Histories of the Public Schools of Detroit*. Detroit: Board of Education, 1967.

Sanborn Map Company. *Detroit, Mich.* Vol. 25, Sheet 76. Pelham, NY: Sanborn Map Company, 2003.