

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 Holcomb, Samuel B., School

Other names/site number Holcomb, Samuel B., Elementary School

## 2. Location

street & number 18100 Bentler St.

☐ not for publication

city or town Detroit

☐ vicinity

State Michigan

code MI

county Wayne

code 163

zip code 48219

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

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

I hereby certify that this X 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 X 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

X 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

    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:)

Holcomb, Samuel B., School  
Name of Property

Wayne, MI  
County and State

## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

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

### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box)

|                                     |             |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| <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      |

### Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

| Contributing | Noncontributing |              |
|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 1            | 2               | buildings    |
|              |                 | sites        |
|              |                 | structures   |
|              |                 | Objects      |
|              |                 | buildings    |
| 1            | 2               | <b>Total</b> |

### Name of related multiple property listing

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

Public Schools of Detroit

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

## 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)

Late Gothic Revival

### Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Concrete

walls: Brick

roof: Asphalt

other: Stone: Limestone

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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**

Facing west onto Bentler Street, Samuel D. Holcomb School sits just northeast of the city's Old Redford area. It shares a city block with numerous residential buildings. Built in 1925 and expanded in 1929, it is a single-story Collegiate Gothic structure with gable-, hip-, and flat-roofed elements. The building has an irregular, though roughly rectangular, footprint and encloses two courtyards.

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### **Narrative Description**

Holcomb School is faced with red-brown common bond brickwork. Although the entire building is a single story in height, a prominent central section is somewhat taller than the remainder of the building, and bears a side-gabled roof. Two mullioned bay windows with stone trim project from the façade, each bearing a stone cartouche above. This section of the building is topped with an octagonal, louvered, copper cupola.

Flanking wings, slightly lower in profile but also side-gabled, extend to the north and south of the building's central section. Starting from the building's center and continuing outwards, each wing contains a bay of windows, followed by a projecting entrance pavilion, followed in turn by two more bays of windows. The building's north wing then contains an additional entrance pavilion, followed by an additional bay of windows. Individual bays are delineated by projecting, buttress-like brick piers. Windows are aluminum replacements. Entrance pavilions each contain a triple steel doorway, surmounted by a semicircular transom, recessed within a segmental-arch-head stone surround. Above the door opening, horizontal bands of herringbone brickwork flank a stone panel depicting a shield with the words "Samuel B. Holcomb School" in raised Blackletter script. Each entrance pavilion is topped with a half-hip roof.

Side entrances create a secondary façade on the building's south elevation. Here, the building's flat roof is visible. Three double steel doorways are set within segmental-arch-head stone surrounds. The middle of these doorways is surmounted by a stone panel reading "AUDITORIUM" in relief in serif lettering, and topped by a half-hip roof.

The building features two courtyards. A semicircular bay window, a feature typically found on Redford elementary schools (such as Mettetal, Coffey, Hubert, and Yost Schools), opens into one of the building's courtyards and is thus not visible from the exterior. Also on the building's interior, a 1949 Pewabic drinking fountain designed by the Boston Tile Company is identical to that of Schulze School, a Detroit school which has since been demolished.

## 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

Community Planning and Development

### Period of Significance

1925-1949

### Significant Dates

1925, 1926, 1929, 1946, 1949

### Significant Person

N/A

### Cultural Affiliation

N/A

### Architect/Builder

Raymond Carey

### Period of Significance (justification)

The Period of Significance coincides with the building's 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)

Samuel D. Holcomb School is locally significant under National Register *Criterion A* for its association with the village of Redford, which became part of Detroit when that part of Redford Township was annexed by the growing city in 1926. It is also locally significant under *Criterion C* for its Collegiate Gothic architecture.

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

Samuel D. Holcomb School was founded in September 1925 with the construction of a single-story school building. Although many of Redford Union's elementary schools, such as Mettetal, Coffey, and Hubert Schools (all of which were also built in 1925), consisted of smaller buildings constructed in then-remote parts of the township, Holcomb School was located in Redford's commercial and residential center, the village of Redford. As such, it was designed from the start as a thirteen-room school building -- larger than a typical township school, though still not approaching the size of most Detroit schools of the time. It was originally established to serve District #1 of Redford Union Schools, but was absorbed by the school system of the rapidly growing City of Detroit prior to the start of the 1926-1927 school year. Holcomb School originally served an area bounded by McNichols, Grand River, Berg, Seven Mile, and Evergreen Roads. It was named in honor of a physician and longtime resident of Redford. A library and kindergarten were included in this initial unit; vocational and "Domestic Arts" courses for residents of the surrounding area were provided in a temporary structure located on the site.

As the area's population continued to grow, a second unit, featuring six additional classrooms, a lunchroom, and a gymnasium, was added in April 1929, allowing the capacity of the school to exceed one thousand students. This was quickly followed by another temporary classroom building, though economic conditions delayed the erection of a permanent addition to the building until 1946, when a third unit added five additional classrooms, an auditorium, a shop, and more restrooms, at a cost of \$442,335.

Although the original architect of Holcomb School is not known, the township school districts acted independently in their hiring of architects, adding more variety to the Detroit system once annexed. This attractive, single-story building came to be known for its pleasant setting, and a 1938 account of the site describes "flowers, garden paths, and a miniature pool... the advantages of the country woodside brought to [a] city school doorstep".<sup>i</sup> Building permits identify Raymond Carey as the architect of the building's second unit; he possibly designed the initial unit as well. In 1949, the Boston Tile Company supervised the installation of a Pewabic tile drinking fountain in Holcomb School, matching that of the city's Frederick Schulze School.

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

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<sup>i</sup> Detroit Board of Education.

Holcomb, Samuel B., School  
Name of Property

Wayne, MI  
County and State

## 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** 8.85  
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage)

### UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

|   |      |         |          |   |      |         |          |
|---|------|---------|----------|---|------|---------|----------|
| 1 | 17   | 314629  | 4699044  | 3 |      |         |          |
|   | Zone | Easting | Northing |   | Zone | Easting | Northing |
| 2 |      |         |          | 4 |      |         |          |
|   | Zone | Easting | Northing |   | Zone | Easting | Northing |

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

E BENTLER 12 THRU 1 SERPS REDFORD SUB L40 P73 PLATS, W C R 22/400

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

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

## 11. Form Prepared By

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

Holcomb, Samuel B., School  
Name of Property

Wayne, MI  
County and State

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.

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**

## Bibliography

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

Detroit, City of, Buildings and Safety Engineering Department. *Building Permit Card Index*. Permit #52676, November 5, 1928; Permit #22271, June 24, 1948.

Sanborn Map Company. *Detroit, Mich.* Vol. 28, Sheet 39. 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 Viverra Ink

1. West elevation.  
(MI\_Wayne\_HolcombSch0001.tif)
2. West elevation looking southeast.  
(MI\_Wayne\_HolcombSch0002.tif)
3. South elevation.  
(MI\_Wayne\_HolcombSch0003.tif)



