

6 Ruthruff



Address: 6311 W Chicago

Parcel: 16004721-46

District: 6

SNF Area: n/a

Owner: City of Detroit

Site Area: 2.14 ac

Gross Floor Area: 32,000

Floors: 2

Plan Type: I

School Type:

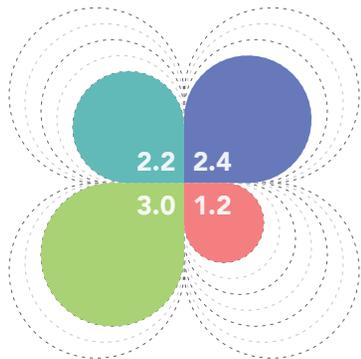
Year Built: 1925, 1930, 1950s

Zoned: B4

Base Rehab Cost (est): \$1.3M

Total Rehab Cost (est): \$8.7M

Condition Market



History

Neighborhood



Building Overview

2-story I-plan with annex

Double-loaded main corridor, with protruding gym and auditorium wings.

1-story windowless 1950s-era former commercial property was annexed and attached via gym.

Original building is tudor-revival style with decorative brick and stonework, exposed timber details, and gabel roof.

Mass masonry wall construction with concrete joist floor slabs and steel frame roof.

Shingled roof appears relatively new but flashings have been scrapped, leading to water infiltration.

Small second-floor auditorium (above kindergarten) with barrel-vault ceiling.

Interior finishes deteriorated; widespread water and fire damage.

Small site is mostly paved, except for a small rectangle of grass in the southwest quadrant.

School building has minimal setbacks on the north and east frontage.

Neighborhood Overview

Located in Midwest neighborhood, just south of Russell Woods-Nardin Park SNF area.

Located on Livernois, a major north-south commercial corridor.

School site is zoned B-4 commercial Little commercial development nearby; mostly auto-oriented uses.

Other adjacent nonresidential uses include churches and fire station.

Single-family residential neighborhood to the southwest has high vacancy and majority DLBA-ownership.

Single-family residential neighborhood to the southeast is dense, with few vacancies and few DLBA-owned properties.

Development Overview

Opportunities

- Busy location ideal for commercial development
- Immediate access via freeway and transit.
- Zoned B4 commercial, unusual for school site.

Challenges

- Noisy location near freeway, major road, and fire station not ideal for residential uses.

Real Estate Market summary:

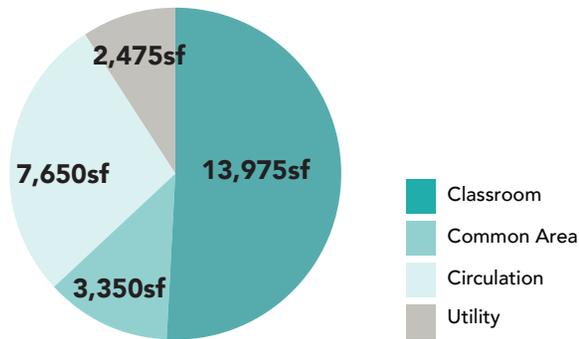
(1-mi radius, compared against subset of 39 City-owned vacant schools)

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

Market-based Use Recommendations

- Best market for office or retail uses due to highly accessible location, commercial zoning, low office vacancy, and high office rents.

Existing Floorplan + Program



27,450sf net floor area

Structure

- Steel frame
- Load-bearing masonry

Roof System:

- Steel frame
- Wood deck with shingles (slope)

Facade:

- Brick
- Wood frame windows
- Wood lintels

Floor System:

- Concrete joist and slab

Interior Walls:

- Gypsum block/brick with plaster

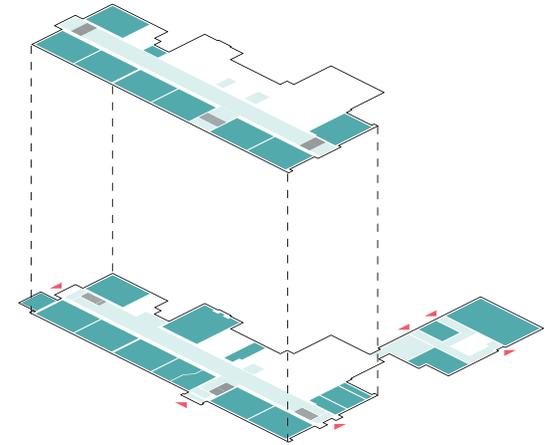
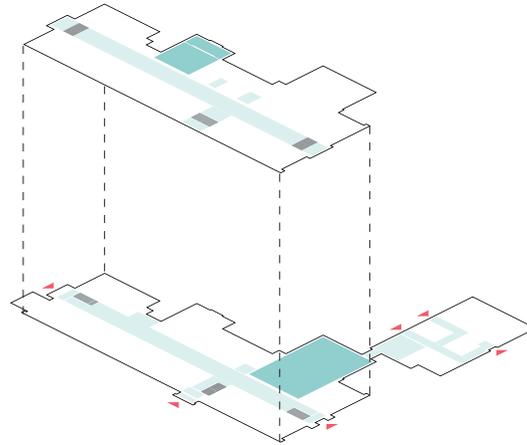
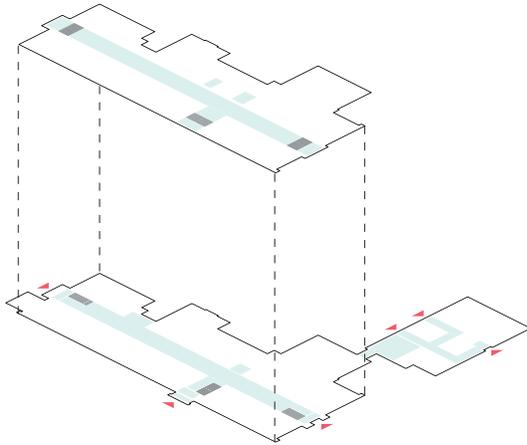
Second Floor



First Floor



Existing Floorplan + Program



Circulation

The original building has a single double-loaded corridor with stairwells at the ends and a primary entrance and stair in the middle. Corridors are 13' wide, with 12'7" ceilings on the first floor, and 10'2" on the second.

The annexed commercial building was subdivided and has an irregular circulation plan.

Common Areas

Ruthruff has a typical 40x60' gymnasium on the ground floor. It has a small auditorium located on the second floor above the kindergarten. At 28'x23'6", the auditorium is much smaller than those typically found in elementary schools. The space has a high vaulted ceiling. The stage has been walled off.

Classroom Areas

Classrooms are primarily arranged along the front of the building, facing Livernois. The opposite side of the corridor is primarily used for common areas, restrooms, locker rooms, offices, and storage spaces. Typical classrooms are approximately 22x30' with 12' ceilings.

School History

William Ruthruff School (Detroit Association of Black Organizations Last Chance Academy)

Ruthruff School began as a one-story wooden one-room schoolhouse built in 1858 in then-rural Greenfield Township. Its site had 123 feet of frontage on what is now West Chicago Boulevard and 251 feet on the west side of what is now Livernois Avenue, and cost \$1,300. A one-story, brick, one-room schoolhouse replaced it in 1885. It was the only permanent school building in District #10 of Greenfield Township before its annexation to the City of Detroit in 1916. Its name dates back to the farmstead across the street belonging to William Ruthruff, whose farmhouse was located on the corner of Stoepel Avenue and West Chicago Boulevard. Ruthruff was a member of the Greenfield School Board until it came under the control of the City of Detroit. He died in 1921.

By 1916, the area around Ruthruff School was growing steadily. The district was changed from a primary school district to a graded school district, in the area referred to as the "Howlett" community. Two rooms were added, as well as some temporary rooms, before it was torn

down in June, 1923 after the Northwest Improvement Association requested more adequate facilities. On January 27, 1925, plans were presented to the Board of Education for the erection of a two section, two-story brick building. The first section was completed in September, 1925 and the second added at a later date. The Board of Education voted to retain the Ruthruff name.

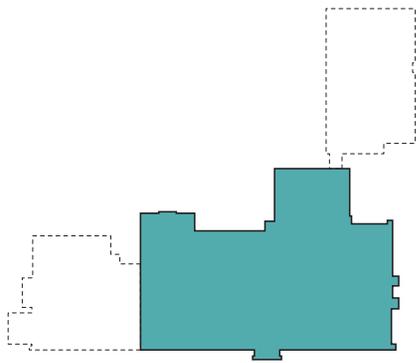
Ruthruff School is a small building designed for a site that could not accommodate many extensions. It was designed for two sections, the first of which was completed in 1925. Its first and second story floor plans were published in the school board's Annual Report for that year. It was planned to house a complete twelve section platoon school. The layout of this first section is basically a lateral corridor with rooms opening off of it. This included a two-story tall gymnasium and a kindergarten on the first floor, an addition to the Science room, Literature room, Music and art room, one home room and a Conservatory. Five additional home rooms, auxiliary rooms to the gymnasium such as showers, and an auditorium occupy the second story. The auditorium was situated directly above

the large kindergarten room in the back corner of the building. The new building cost \$177,263 and had a 620 pupil capacity when it opened. In 1927, two stores were leased for additional space adjacent to the school building because of increased enrollment. Its playground size was enlarged when lots on Livernois were purchased and houses were torn down.

Its second section containing six rooms was added in 1930. It was a six-room addition built at a cost of \$63,048 to accommodate 160 more students. This addition brought the peak enrollment of the school to 825. Ruthruff School then had the distinction of having the largest Parent Teacher Association in the system, it having been organized in 1922.

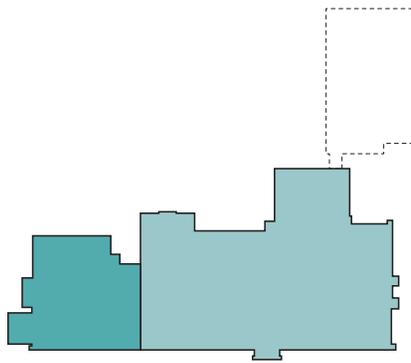
Excerpted from United States Department of the Interior National Park Service National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (Draft). Ruthruff, William, School. Goldstein, D., City of Detroit Historic Designation Advisory Board (2009)

Building Evolution



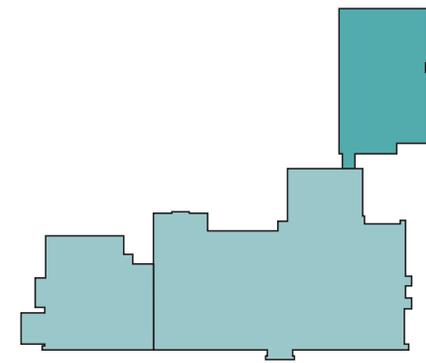
Original Unit (1927)

The original two-story unit featured ten classrooms, a kindergarten, gymnasium, and a small second-floor auditorium. This school is somewhat unique in that the gym and auditorium were built in the first phase, not later.



First Addition (1930)

The school was expanded shortly after opening, with six additional classes. The addition matches the architectural style of the original building.



Second Addition (1950s)

At an unknown date prior to 1990, an adjacent 1950s-era 1-story commercial building was annexed by the school. The existing building was attached to the gymnasium via a small corridor. Sanborn maps show that the annex was previously used for printing and light manufacturing.



East elevation as seen from Livernois. While most schools have open space between the building and the street, Ruthruff has very small setbacks along Livernois and Chicago to the north.



A detail of the unique tudor-revival brick details on the south elevation.



A 1950s-era commercial building adjacent to the school (formerly a commercial printer) was annexed by the school and connected to the gym.



The second-floor main corridor. The school's main hallways are a generous 13 feet wide. A deteriorated roof has led to widespread water damage throughout the second floor.



Typical classroom windows, showing original wood frames. The window assemblies were replaced with aluminum replacements, which have since been scrapped.



A hole in the ceiling of this second floor classroom reveals a red brick wall and soaring attic space above. The ceiling could be removed to create a loft-like space.

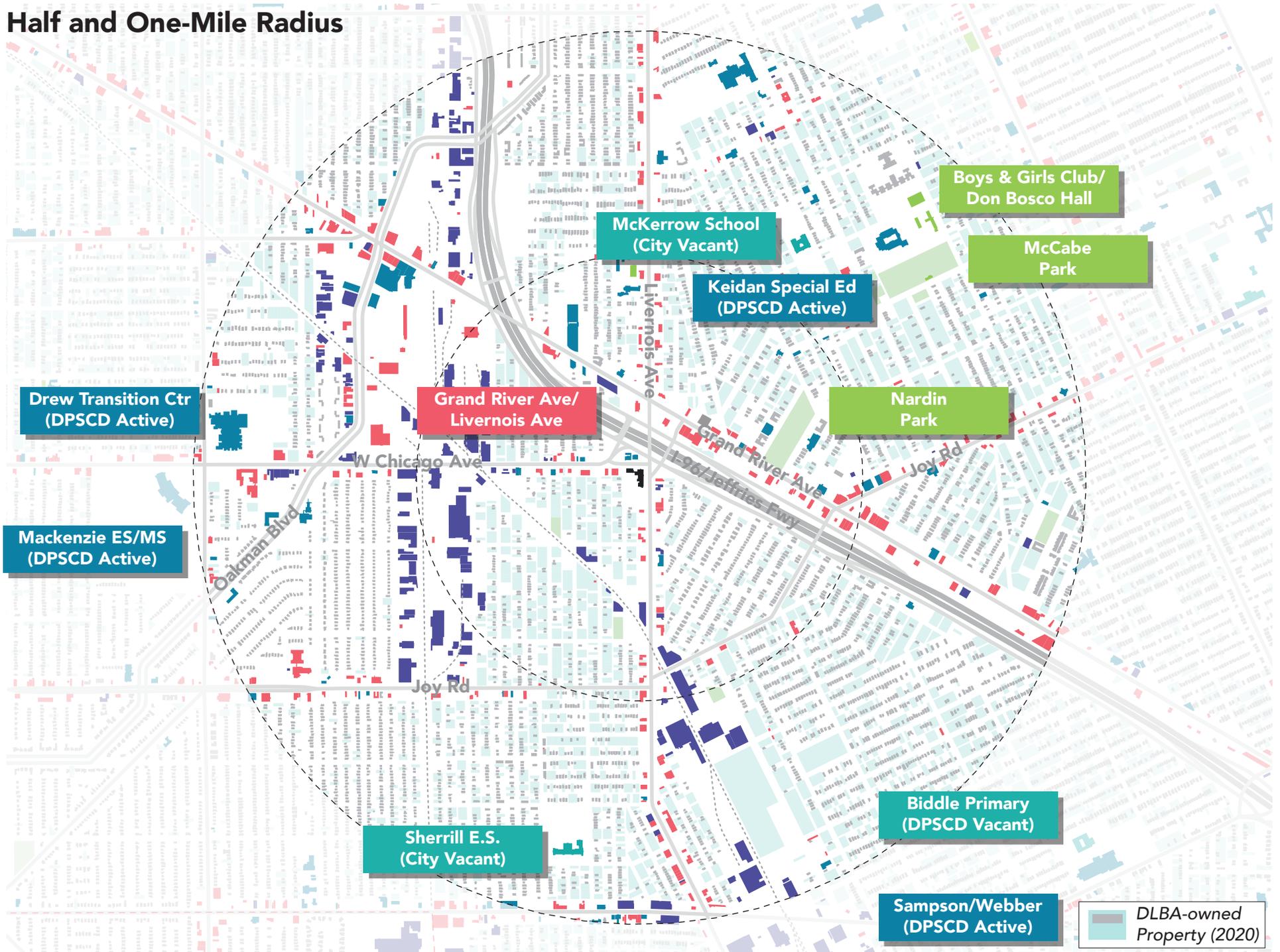


The gymnasium is a brick box with nearly 17-foot high ceilings and 11-foot-tall windows at the western end.



A small barrel-vaulted auditorium is on the second floor above the kindergarten. The stage has been closed off with drywall.

Half and One-Mile Radius



Neighborhood By The Numbers

51_{/100}

Walkscore
Somewhat walkable

0.0_{mi}

Transit Access
Immediate access to
DDOT Connect Ten or Key Route

0.0_{mi}

Freeway Access
Immediate access to
freeway ramp

0.3_{mi}

Park Access
5-10 minute walk
to nearest park (1+ acre)

2.2_{mi}

Nearest Recreation Center
No city rec center
within walking distance

2.2_{mi}

Library Access
No public library
within walking distance

51%

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

144

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

2.0%

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