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Former CPS building in Uptown turned into apartments

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Morningside Stewart

A rendering of Stewart School as apartment house.

A former school building in Uptown has been fitted out with 64 apartments that will begin leasing to tenants March 16.

Built in 1905, the former Graeme Stewart School on Kenmore Avenue was designed by Dwight Perkins, who at the time was the Chicago Board of Education's chief architect. He also designed Schurz and Lane Tech high schools, among **many other buildings**. Stewart was one of 49 Chicago Public Schools facilities shut down in 2013.



"It's been a wonderful experience to go through the building and see all these details that we could bring back to life," said Mary Ellen Martin, executive vice president of the development firm Morningside Group, which is redeveloping the building.

Rents in the building, called Stewart School Lofts, will run from \$1,655 a month for a 565-square-foot studio to \$3,955 for a 1,745-square-foot three-bedroom. Ceiling heights range from nine to 20 feet.

The western facade of the building, looking across a closed section of Kenmore Avenue toward Broadway and the CTA's Red Line tracks, has landmark protection, so balconies could only be added on the east side. There's also a rooftop deck available to all tenants.

Morningside bought the Stewart School building from CPS for \$5.1 million in 2015. At the time, Martin said, she was sure of a residential use for the building but not clear on how many units the building could accommodate. "After we closed, I was walking through the building and popped open a hatch and found this big attic space," she told Crain's. Units on that level have restored clay tile mansard ceilings, formerly part of the roof but now with a new roof built above them, Martin said.



Details like that and the extra windows on the door in an apartment that was once the principal's office mean that "every unit in the building is unique," Martin said. The rehab included updating utilities and installing an elevator.

The first units will be available for move-ins in mid-April, she said. Parking is an additional \$225 a month indoors and \$150 outdoors. The building is less than a block from the recently rehabbed Wilson station on the Red Line.

Stewart is the second former CPS building to be converted to apartments in the past year. The former Mulligan School in Lincoln Park, which the school district sold off in 2013, before the mass shutdowns in 2015, **reopened as a 24-unit rental building** in June.





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