

Uptown grammar school gets new life as upscale apartments — complete with chalkboards



A peek inside the Stewart School Lofts, a new Uptown apartment building where contemporary kitchens and bathrooms contrast with historic elements.



By **Pamela Dittmer McKuen**
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Fun fact: You can sleep at Indiana Jones' former grammar school.

Graeme Stewart School in Uptown was built in 1905 and served young students for more than a century. After closing due to low enrollment in 2013, the brick-and-limestone building has been transformed into an upscale rental community named Stewart School Lofts.

Actor [Harrison Ford](#), who played the adventure hero in the four-film franchise, is said to have attended the school.

During the two-year renovation, the school's classrooms, gymnasium, auditorium, library and principal's office were fashioned into living spaces. Contemporary kitchens and bathrooms contrast with such historic elements

as transom windows, exposed brick walls, wood detail and even a few black chalkboards. The first residents arrived in May.

“We tried to keep as much of the character and integrity of the school intact while making it livable and giving people the modern elements they want in an apartment,” said Alison Solway, marketing director for Chicago-based real estate developer Morningside Group.

The units

The 64 apartments at Stewart School Lofts range from studio to three bedrooms configured into more than 30 floor plans. Many are one of a kind. The apartments are on the first through fifth floors.

All apartments have an in-unit washer and dryer, walk-in closets with organizers, window shades, and expanded ceiling heights up to 20 feet. Kitchens have stainless steel appliances, white quartz counters, white tile backsplash and a peninsula or movable island. The duotone cabinets are espresso woodgrain on the bottom and glossy white on top. Skylights are per plan.

The flooring varies from unit to unit. Where the original hardwood floors could be refurbished, they were. The wood floors in the two apartments created from the former gymnasium still bear the basketball court lines. A few units are floored in vinyl plank, and some bedrooms are carpeted. Lower level apartments, which sit a couple of feet below grade, have finished concrete floors.

Apartments that face east — the rear of the building — have patios or balconies. But because the building is recognized as a Chicago Landmark, the west-facing front facade must remain intact. Outdoor space is not a design option for apartments on that side. Instead, they were given interior foyers with square footage carved from the building’s extra-wide central hallway.

A 1,485-square-foot model on the second floor opens to a foyer flanked by a linear closet and laundry closet. The two bedrooms are separated by an expansive living and dining room, where the kitchen is defined by an appliance wall and movable island. The master bedroom has a walk-in closet and en suite bath with a dual vanity. The second bedroom, which has a walk-in closet, is adjacent to the hallway bath. A third walk-in closet is near the foyer.

Considering the many architectural variations within the apartments, prospective tenants are often challenged to choose just one, Solway said.

“The good news is they are all kind of unique and fun,” she said.

The amenities

The primary amenity at Stewart School Lofts is the fifth-floor rooftop deck. The expanse is smartly furnished for lounging, dining or viewing the eastern and southern cityscape. A pergola shades the sun, and a fire pit wards off seasonal chill. The grilling station is available for outdoor cooking enthusiasts.

Residents with cars have two assigned parking choices: an enclosed surface lot or the heated indoor garage. Bicycle storage is complimentary.

Within short walking distances are Target, Aldi grocery store, coffee shops and restaurants as well as Challenger Park and Montrose Beach. Nearby entertainment venues include the Riviera Theatre, Aragon Ballroom and [Green Mill](#). CTA bus stops and the Wilson station are on North Broadway.

The folks behind it

Stewart School Lofts was developed, and is owned and managed, by Chicago-based Morningside Stewart, L.L.C., an entity of Morningside Group. The original architect was Dwight Perkins, who designed 40 schools for the Chicago Board of Education. The adaptive reuse architect was Pappageorge Haymes Partners in Chicago.

The fine print

Stewart School Lofts

4525 N. Kenmore Ave.

Chicago IL 60640

www.StewartSchoolLofts.com

773-878-4525

Apartments: Prices based on availability and subject to change. Promotional specials may apply. Studio, 565 to 695 square feet, from \$1,655; one-bedroom, 760 to 1,185 square feet, from \$1,905; one-bedroom plus den, should be 1,065 to 1,325 square feet, from \$2,355; two-bedroom, 1,100 to 1,545 square feet, from \$2,355; two-bedroom plus den, 1,495 to 1,765 square feet, from \$3,355; three-bedroom, 1,240 to 1,745 square feet, from \$3,505.

Lease terms: 6-month to 24-month leases; \$65 application fee per applicant; \$500 administration fee.

Renter's insurance: Required.

Utilities: Tenant pays all utilities.

Parking: Indoor heated garage space, \$225 a month; outdoor surface parking, \$150 a month.

Pets: 2 pets maximum; \$300 one-time pet fee and \$30 a month per pet. Weight limits and breed restrictions apply.

Smoking policy: Nonsmoking.

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