



Case Study:
DePaul Riverside Apartments

SWBR

Riverside Apartments - Restored to the Community

Buffalo's Riverside Academy closed in 2002, after over 100 years of service. The original building was constructed in 1896, with a major addition in 1921. After years of neglect, the building was falling into serious disrepair. The client looked past the dilapidated appearance and took a chance on the structure as the site for 68 affordable and supportive care apartments.

The existing structure provided unique challenges for use as an apartment building. The generous corridors and floor heights allow for open, light-filled spaces, but the building also contains much more service and common area than would normally be found in an apartment building. The design team used creative strategies to overcome these challenges. Elevated floors were installed within the gymnasium, locker and toilet rooms, and the basement in order to bring the occupied level up to the existing high windows, providing space for seventeen additional apartments. The auditorium, much too large for the project, was split into two sections. The front area was restored to its original beauty for use as a community room; the rear area was partitioned off for use as conference, office, and support spaces.

Existing materials were reused within the building wherever possible. Classroom doors were restored for use as apartment entrances. Hardwood floors pulled from the gymnasium were refinished and used as hallway flooring. Marble shower partitions from the locker rooms were repurposed as wainscoting in the community and staff restrooms. Chalk-board surfaces were designed into enclosures to hold the new community mailboxes.

Riverside Academy is deeply embedded in the history and identity of the neighborhood. Since its closing, the school has been a source of blight and a magnet for crime. This project has transformed an empty shell, home for only the memories of the neighbors who grew up attending the school, into a vibrant apartment complex. New residents are fast integrating into the neighborhood, and the client has opened the doors of the building to neighbors for community events, restoring this building as the heart of the community.



Building Area: (sf)

101,000 sf

Cost per Square Foot:

\$203

Construction Cost

\$20.3 million

Date of Substantial Completion:

February 2014

Location of Project:

Buffalo, NY

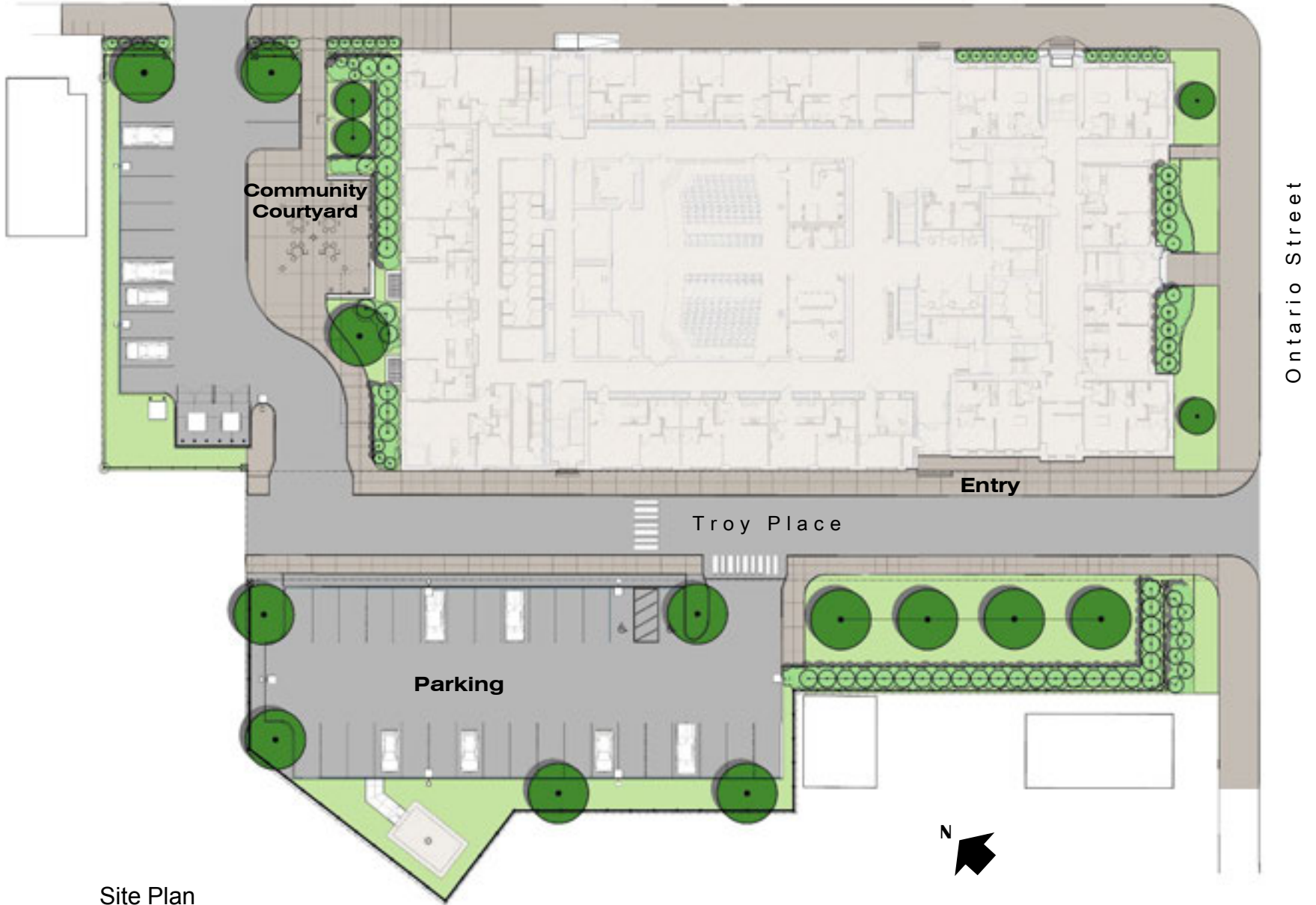
Type of Project:

Historic Restoration and Adaptive Reuse of a former school into a new affordable and supportive apartment building

Construction materials, mechanical systems or other pertinent information:

Existing steel, masonry, and concrete. New historic replica ceilings, wood plank paneling, and interior fixtures and furnishings.

Saratoga Street



Community
Courtyard

Entry

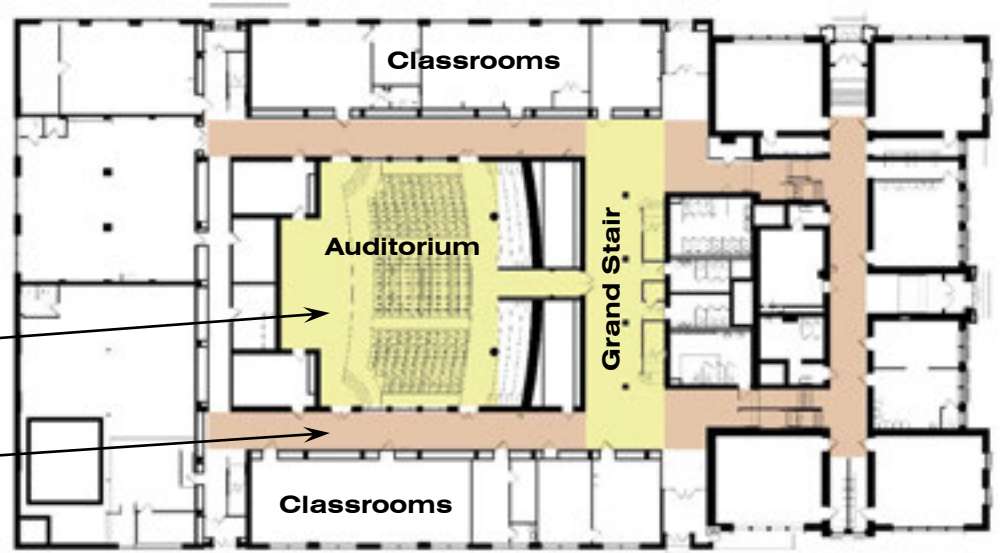
Troy Place

Parking



Ontario Street

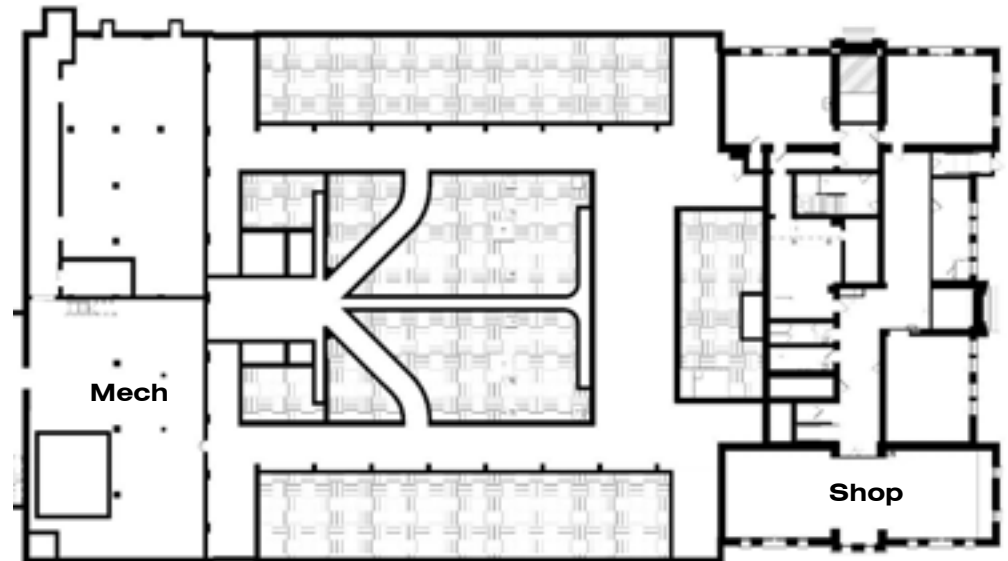
Site Plan



Primary
Historic Space

Secondary
Historic Space

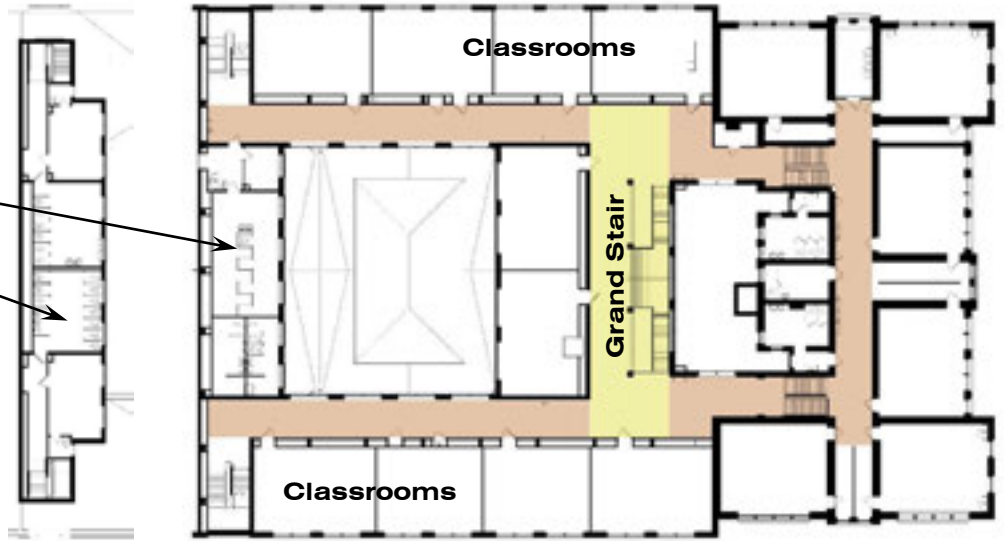
Level One (Before)



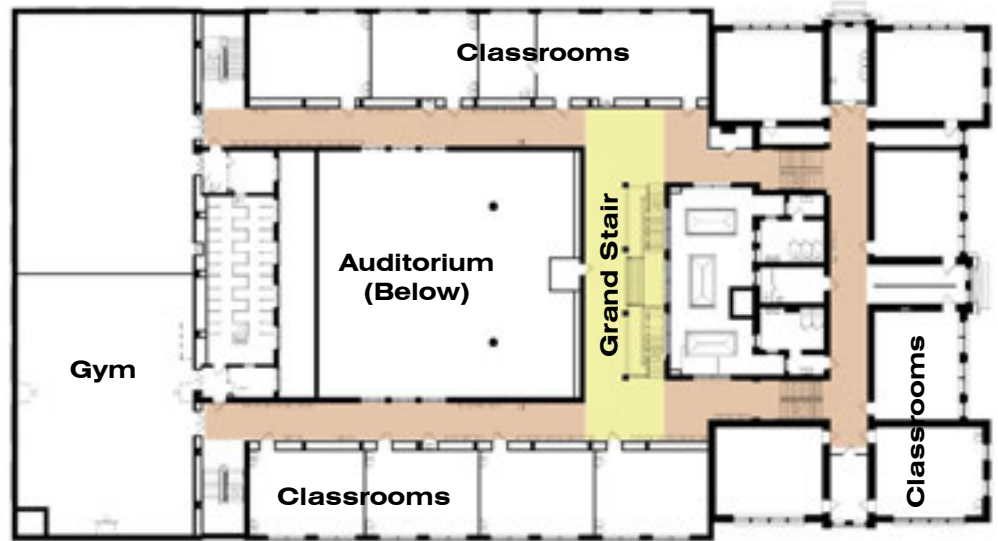
Basement (Before)



Locker Rooms
Restrooms

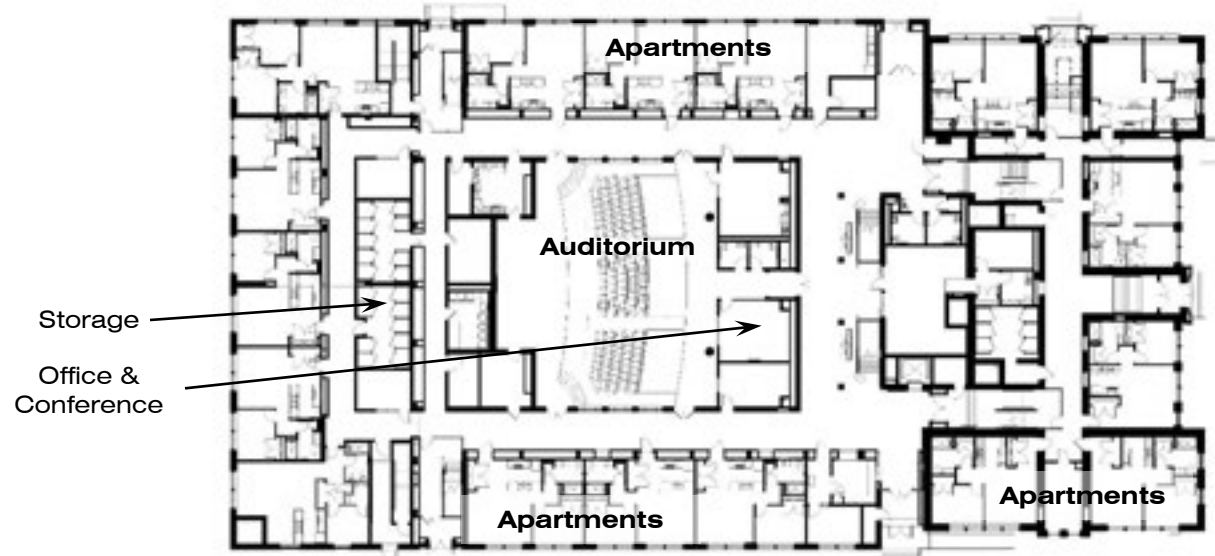


Level Four and Level Three (Before)



Level Two (Before)

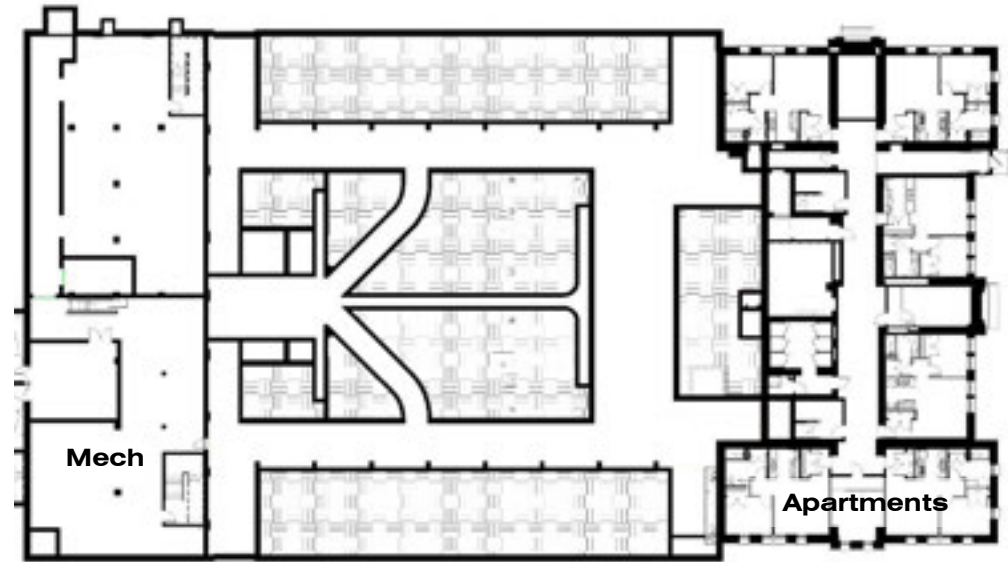
Classrooms and offices are redesigned into apartments, while interior spaces are used for storage, laundry, and building systems.



The primary Auditorium space has been fully restored, while the rear portion has been repurposed into valuable office, meeting, and support space

Level One (After)

The existing deep basement provided valuable storage and mechanical space, while the daylight basement has been transformed into viable apartments.



Basement (After)

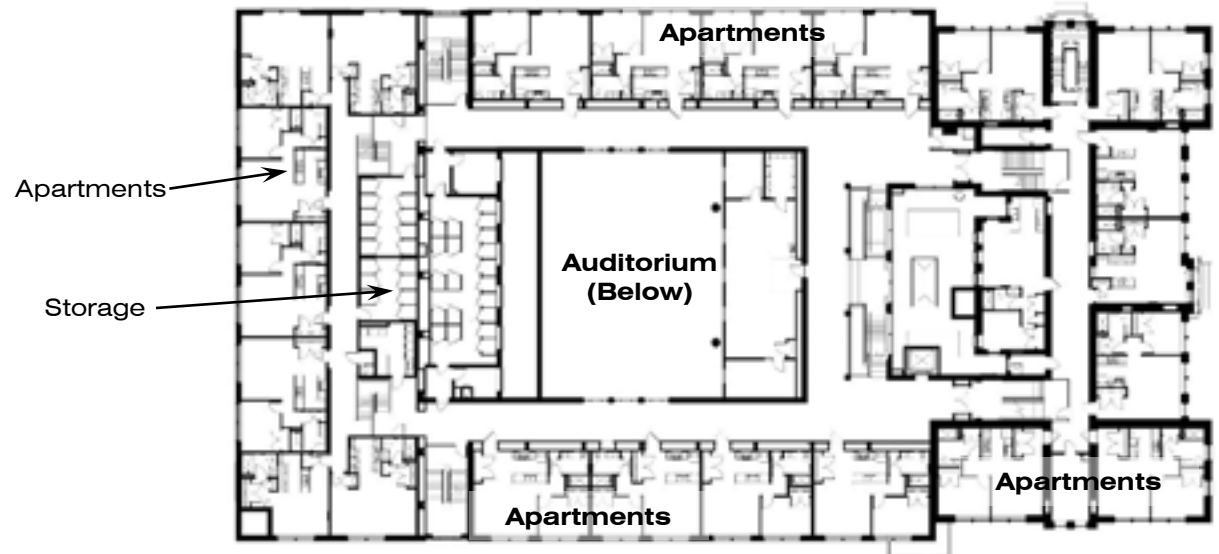
Interior light wells provide daylight for interior facing apartments.



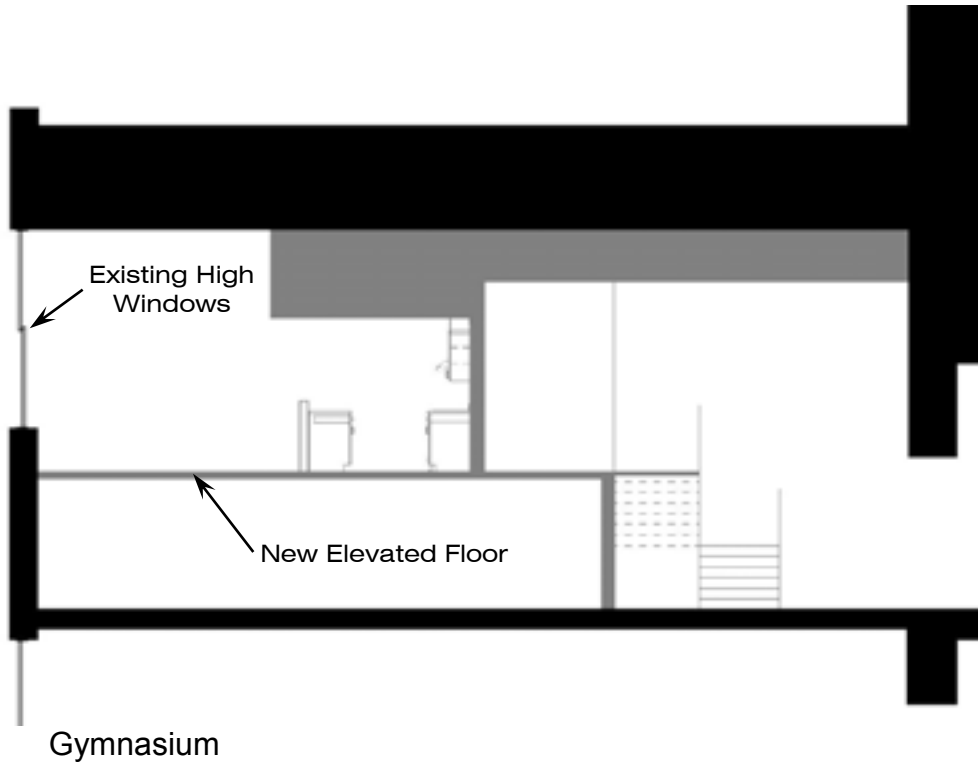
Level Four and Level Three (After)

A small fourth floor contained locker rooms, which were repurposed into two apartments with views to the waterfront.

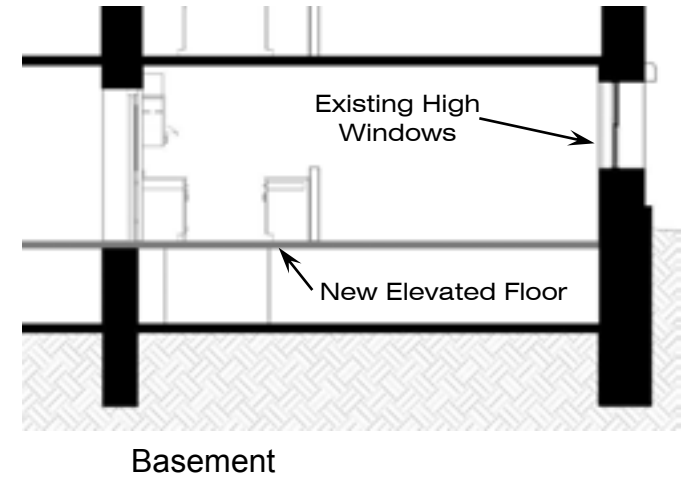
The gymnasium was ringed with apartments and infilled with needed storage and support space.



Level Two (After)



Elevated floor decks were constructed within the existing gymnasium, locker rooms, and daylight basement spaces, providing useable space for 17 additional units.



Section Diagrams



New Front Entrance *former side door has been opened up to create a new entrance*

(Before)

2015-22



New Front Entrance *wood planking provides a warm compliment to existing brick*



Lobby & Reception *wood planking continues through the vestibule to accent the reception desk*



New Elevator *constructed in existing light well, elevator avoids taking up valuable floor area*



Grand Stair *slate from chalk boards has been repurposed to house tenant mailboxes*

(Before)



(Before)

Grand Stair *original atrium fills central hall with daylight*



Grand Stair *glass railings provide updated safety without compromising historic appearance*

(Before)



Circulation *gypsum and wood ceiling 'clouds' conceal building systems below historic ceiling*

(Before)



Apartment Living Area *replacement historic replica windows provide ample daylight*

(Before)



Apartment Kitchen *historic classroom doors repurposed for apartment entrances*



Auditorium *this community space can serve daily gatherings and special events*



Auditorium *the surrounding neighborhood uses the auditorium for community events*