

**ELIGIBILITY ASSESSMENT ROUTE FORM**  
**NATIONAL REGISTER AND SURVEY SECTION**

**NAME OF PROPERTY**

Scarritt Elementary School – EAJA223

MPDF Applies: [https://mostateparks.com/sites/mostateparks/files/HistoricResources\\_Kansas-City-Missouri\\_School-District\\_Pre-1970.pdf](https://mostateparks.com/sites/mostateparks/files/HistoricResources_Kansas-City-Missouri_School-District_Pre-1970.pdf)

**ADDRESS**

3509 Anderson Avenue

Kansas City

**COUNTY**

Jackson

**REQUESTED BY:**

Mason Martel

Rosin Preservation LLC

1712 Holmes Street

Kansas City MO 64108

REVIEW DUE BY: **May 23, 2023**

**Reviewer Name: Lesley**

☐ Based upon reviewed information, the property does not clearly fulfill any criteria (not eligible)

☐ Based upon reviewed information, the property seems to fulfill at least one criterion  
Applicable NR Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

☐ More information is needed to make an assessment (only select if requesting additional information; describe the requested information below)

Area(s) of significance: ARCHITECTURE

EDUCATION

Do criteria considerations apply? ☐ yes ☒ no Which one(s)? \_\_\_\_

**AND/OR**

☐ The property lacks integrity (note concerns in comments below)

District potential probable? ☐ yes ☐ no

**Comments, insights, personal knowledge:**

Old Scarritt, designed by William F. Hackney, in 1891, was listed in the MPDF as being part of the town of Westport that was eventually annexed into KC in 1897. If nominated it would be of local significance.

Criterion A – “properties demonstrate the evolution of public educational practices and trends in educational philosophy...as locations where experimental educational theories were tested...” MPDF acknowledges that other contexts, other than the Progressive Era educational trends and theories, not addressed in the document can have significance under Criterion A. Being one of four schools to pilot an “accelerated training and instruction” program for “above average students” at the elementary and high school levels, Scarritt was unique in the fact that it drew students from areas outside of its enrollment boundaries, and bused children in from other elementary schools in the NE area of the city because of its location and available classroom space. Only Scarritt and one other school hosted full-day classes. Other schools offered gifted classes but Scarritt Elementary School became the sole school that continued to operate a gifted program in the NE part of KC 1950s-1970s.

The MPDF that the educational theory begun during the Progressive Era did not manifest itself in physical form until the 1950s. It called for child-centered rather than teacher centered classrooms fostering learning by doing rather than rote memorization and allowed children more freedom to move about and explore learning for themselves through a variety of materials. The introduction of freedom and flexibility into the method of teaching and had direct impacts on the design of the physical space in which that learning occurred. Weighing this with the gifted educational program and the degree Scarritt played in administering the educational program, I feel there is a good possibility that this property could be eligible under Criterion A.

Criterion C – The building, both the 1927 and the 1961 blocks, do exhibit features associated with the Progressive Era themes: safety, sanitation, linear, long double-loaded corridors on the interior with the function emphasizing open spaces to allow desks to be arranged differently in order reflect that shift to child-centered rather than teacher centered. A short biography of Charles A. Smith, the architect of the 1906 & 1927 blocks was known for his designs that incorporated the themes of the Progressive Era which included classrooms for manual training, sewing, art, music, gymnasiums and auditoriums. He incorporated aspects of the Gary Plan, the Platoon Plan; and the Open Air Movement and is known for utilizing a system of mechanical ventilation to exchange air in the building every 10 minutes.

Scarritt received an addition in 1960 to accommodate Post WWII population boom education needs. Modern themes, as identified in the MPDF under Modern Era Schools identify some of the characteristics found at Scarritt, including features with simple, boxy forms, banded windows, and flat roofs. The architect of the 1961 addition is not elaborated upon in the MPDF. The list of resources it identifies Scarritt as

having a “unique design” (Appendix A p. 87), however, there is nothing in the MDPF that describes any architectural style or feature that is unique.

If the period of significance proposed begins in 1961 and ends in 1970, how is the 1927 building going to be addressed?

The building has retained a large percentage of its historic characteristics, architectural details and function as a school.

According to the MDPF registration requirements state that a Progressive Era school, which is the 1927 block, must retain:

- Historic form and massing, including roof form;
- Historic exterior materials;
- Interior (auditorium/assembly room and gymnasium) and exterior recreation areas;
- Historic fenestration patterns, although windows and doors may have been replaced;
- Basic interior configuration of corridors and stairwells; and
- Additions that are sympathetic to the original design in form and materials may not compromise the integrity of the resource

Alterations including the removal of the balcony in the gymnasium, the conversion of the cooking classroom and sewing room into three classrooms, the asbestos floor on top of the original floor in the auditorium and the paving of the schoolyard for a parking lot have adversely impacted the integrity of the property. It is unknown how the addition of the library has impacted the original layout. Based on these major alterations I would not agree that the 1927 block meets the registrations requirements found in the MPDF.

According to the MDPF registration requirements state that a Modern Movement school must retain:

- Historic form and massing, including roof form
- Historic exterior materials
- Interior and exterior recreation areas
- Historic fenestration patterns, although windows and doors may have been replaced
- Basic interior configuration of corridors and stairwells, or lack thereof
- Additions that are sympathetic to the original design in form and materials may not compromise the integrity of the resource

Alterations identified in the EA identifies two classrooms converted into administrative offices retaining original configurations; an administration office converted into a classroom and a classroom in the west corridor that was enlarged but no additional details regarding structural changes are provided; a crafts room in the northwest corner was divided into two classrooms; and restrooms in the first floor classrooms were removed and converted into cloakrooms. Barring the lack of information on how much integrity has been lost, in particular the crafts room and possibly the restrooms, and the addition of I would consider that most of the 1961 meets the registration requirements found in the MPDF.

While the MPDF discusses many movements of design in schools being built over the years and addresses the trends behind the design, Scarritt was not mentioned in any specific trend or design. The building has retained quite a bit of integrity and sits on its original parcel. The MPDF also discusses school building additions stating “Sympathetic additions older than fifty years of age are part of the evolution of the resource as it continued to serve its original function. They are therefore considered historic and do not compromise the buildings integrity.”

Based on the architectural elements and design of the building, along with the lack of research identifying a unique or significant style, function or rarity, I do not feel the property is eligible under Criterion C, however, the MPDF which seems to have been written to accommodate all school buildings of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, has consistently challenged my assessment.

If this property moves forward in a nomination, I would encourage research be included on how the facilitation or administration of the gifted program impacted the resources creating change in the layout and function of space throughout the structure. Also, there would need to be significant supporting documentation that the gifted program was developed at this location and not somewhere else in the school district or Board of Education office.

**Reviewer Name: Andrew**

☒ Based upon reviewed information, the property does not clearly fulfill any criteria (not eligible)

☐ Based upon reviewed information, the property seems to fulfill at least one criterion  
Applicable NR Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

☐ More information is needed to make an assessment (only select if requesting additional information; describe the requested information below)

Area(s) of significance:

Do criteria considerations apply? ☐ yes ☒ no Which one(s)? \_\_\_\_

AND/OR

☒ The property lacks integrity (note concerns in comments below)

District potential probable? ☐ yes ☐ no

**Comments, insights, personal knowledge:**

I am impressed by the depth and thoroughness of the research in this EA.

In regards to Criterion A-

I accept the argument that Scarritt meets the MPDF's requirement of a location where experimental educational theories were tested. However, the gifted experiment took place before the proposed 1961 start date for the period of significance. "In mid-1958, the Kansas City Board of Education announced plans to begin trials for a pilot study of 'accelerated training and instruction' programs....In 1961, after three years of the gifted classes, District leaders announced that the program had proven a success" (Submission p. 11). I am doubtful that Scarrett has maintained the integrity from the 1958-1961 period due to the 1961 addition.

In regards to Criterion C-

I accept that the argument that the 1961 building retains the integrity required under the MPDF requirements for Criterion C for ARCHITECTURE. However, the MPDF requires that buildings nominated under Criterion C for ARCHITECTURE "must clearly illustrate features designed intentionally to address specific educational theory [sic] or health and safety issues." (Section F, Page 40). The submission did not provide evidence of features designed to address a specific educational theory or a health and safety issue. This requirement could be met by providing evidence that the 1961 addition was designed with features unique to the gifted program.

**Reviewer Name: April**

☐ Based upon reviewed information, the property does not clearly fulfill any criteria (not eligible)

☐ Based upon reviewed information, the property seems to fulfill at least one criterion

Applicable NR Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

☒ More information is needed to make an assessment (only select if requesting additional information; describe the requested information below)

Area(s) of significance: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Do criteria considerations apply? ☐ yes ☐ no Which one(s)? \_\_\_\_

AND/OR

☐ The property lacks integrity (note concerns in comments below)

District potential probable? ☐ yes ☐ no

**Comments, insights, personal knowledge:**

More information is needed to understand and assess the gifted program and how it impacted the building, if it did. What is the Criterion – A: Education? Is Criterion C being considered? What would the Period(s) of Significance be?

I am assuming that the gifted program is being considered as an educational philosophy. My concern at present is that the information on the gifted program is vague, so it is difficult to determine how the building at present represents it. Also, it is my understanding that the pilot program was district-wide (or, rather, was applied to the public schools in the city as a collective entity) and the locations involved shared the same overarching philosophies of the program despite the varying amount of time per day eligible students spent on the program's tasks. If that is the case, it doesn't seem like this location offering full-day or accepting students from beyond its boundary is a significant piece of the history. Maybe more information on how the program was formed, what the students did, and what the findings of the pilot program were would help with this. When the pilot was considered complete? How was the program adjusted, based on the findings? Was length of time spent a variable that was being studied? It seems to make sense that the areas beyond the enrollment boundaries would want to get their kids into the closest school with a gifted program, if theirs didn't have one. If there designated school did have one, but people still preferred Scarritt, that might be another story. Also, it seems like they were able to cast a wider net because they happened to have the space.

The gifted program was started in the 1927 configuration, and now there is only a portion of that building extant (a 1927 addition). It does not seem that the building, in the form it assumed in 1961, was designed with any features influenced by the existence of the gifted program (no specific classrooms, layout, etc). The MPDF (F-40) states that, for both Criteria C and similar discussion in A, eligible resources "...express the architectural vocabulary of educational resources that evolved to accommodate changing educational philosophies. The eligible property must clearly illustrate features designed intentionally to address specific educational theory or health and safety issues." Therefore, I do not believe the gifted program would be the best option to explore.

When were the 1890, 1906, and 1927 entry vestibule removed, in the 1960-61 construction campaign? Has the roof of the 1927 addition's roof been altered, for example from pitched to flat? The MPDF does acknowledge that "in some locations only portions of the earlier building were kept, such as the gymnasium or auditorium" (F-52). But, on F-42, it states that "properties with Ward or Progressive Era buildings and Modern Era additions have a period of significance that begins with the earliest date of construction and ends with the last date of construction, **so long as each section of the building retains integrity** and meets the registration requirements for its respective property type." The Progressive Era

portions are largely gone, leaving only the gym and audition block with a few classroom spaces, which likely do not accurately represent the layout of the majority of the related building.

It seems that Crit. C as the property type would be clearest path.

MPDF E: 33:

"The exterior appearance of the new construction illustrated Modern Movement aesthetics. The long, low rectangular buildings with flat roofs and banded windows were simplified versions of Finger Plan schools. They featured curtain wall construction with masonry cladding. Douglass School (1953) was the first such school in the District (Figures 39 and 40)." Not quite sure about the Finger Plan or if this counts, though.

F: 42:

"Properties with Ward or Progressive Era buildings and Modern Era additions have a period of significance that begins with the earliest date of construction and ends with the last date of construction, **so long as each section of the building retains integrity** and meets the registration requirements for its respective property type."

F:43:

**"Design, materials, and workmanship create the physical characteristics that distinguish the property types.** Therefore integrity in these areas is vital to the eligibility of resources. In order to be eligible for listing, properties must retain the massing and basic exterior massing, roof form, original primary building materials, pattern of window and door openings, and basic interior corridor configuration." These are therefore some of the character-defining, and therefore significant, features.

F: 53:

#### Registration Requirements

To qualify as eligible for listing in the National Register, a Modern Movement school must retain:

- Historic form and massing, including roof form
- Historic exterior materials
- Interior and exterior recreation areas
- Historic fenestration patterns, although windows and doors may have been replaced
- Basic interior configuration of corridors and stairwells, or lack thereof
- Additions that are sympathetic to the original design in form and materials may not compromise the integrity of the resource

**Reviewer Name: Jacob Morris**

☐ Based upon reviewed information, the property does not clearly fulfill any criteria (not eligible)

☐ Based upon reviewed information, the property seems to fulfill at least one criterion  
Applicable NR Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

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describe the requested information below)

Area(s) of significance: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do criteria considerations apply? ☐ yes ☐ no Which one(s)? \_\_\_\_

AND/OR

☐ The property lacks integrity (note concerns in comments below)

District potential probable? ☐ yes ☐ no

**Comments, insights, personal knowledge:**

Criteria A: Education- It remains unclear to me what aspects of the current building are associated with the Gifted program, so it is unclear to what extent the spaces that may have been associated with it have been conveyed.

Criteria C: Architecture- Please note that I may be somewhat biased, since I tend to feel that our previous NPS reviewer was particularly stringent when reviewing institutional properties. I think that the building might not be a specific fit for the MPDF, but that there is a chance that much of the context could be useful in a nomination. The "Historic Adaptation of the Original Property" approach to this building has some potential to be explored, since the addition fits a typology, and alterations to the original building might have been influenced by the modernist era approach to "modernizing" the appearance of the building. In summary, a successful nomination using this approach would be risky, but possible.