

The “Church House”

Wayne Methodist Church Education and Recreation wing



Construction Information

- Address – 3887 Newberry Street. Wayne, Michigan
- Year built – 1929
- Style – Religious Gothic Revival
- Principal Architect – A. E. Weaver
- Contractor – Ernest Arrowsmith
- Heating and Plumbing – Grant Wilcox
- Wiring – James Chisholm
- Cost - \$90,000 (1929)

Church History

Wayne Methodist Church was organized in 1832, and after worshiping in homes and shared spaces finally built their own church in 1863. The red brick building would remain their home until 1929 when they vacated it for this building, the new “Church House”. The church house was to be an education and recreation wing for a sanctuary that was to be built in the future. The original brick church was torn down in 1929. The auditorium was used as the sanctuary “temporarily” for 28 years until ground was broken for the real sanctuary in 1956. The new modern sanctuary was opened in 1957 adjacent to the church house. In the 1980s a new education wing was added onto the church, and the 1929 church house was abandoned. An aging and shrinking membership has meant that the large complex is now becoming a financial burden and the congregation leaders want the 1929 church building removed from their care, either by demolition or sale/rehabilitation.

Structure

The structure is built of yellow-gold brick and a steel framework underneath. The building is multi-level, but primarily is two floors above ground and two floors underground. The basement contains a two-story gymnasium, locker rooms, institutional kitchen space and heating plant. The first floor contains church offices, pastors office and study, secretary room, parlor, classrooms and a two story auditorium with balcony and skylight. The second floor contains a parlor, various meeting and classrooms, and the auditorium balcony.



Laying the cornerstone, steel framework is seen in the background. Ca. 1928

Building History

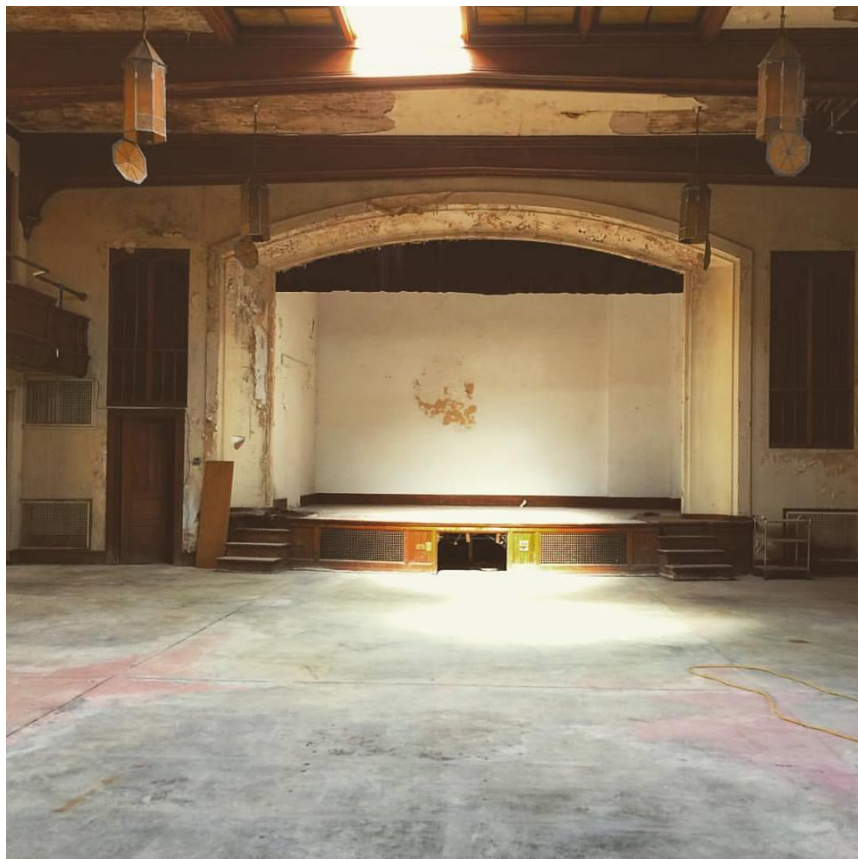
The cornerstone of the building was laid in late 1928, and was dedicated September 15, 1929. It was intended to be a wing for a future church which would be built when funds were available. The auditorium served as the worship space for 28 years until the actual sanctuary was built. The \$90,000 debt was paid off in 1944, and the building was the center of church social life until the 1980s. The gym hosted basketball and volleyball games, as well as church fairs and could be set as a dining room for 350 people. The auditorium has a stage and was used for plays and community gatherings for years, it could seat 550. The 18 classrooms taught Sunday school to over 300 kids every Sunday for decades. When the new educational wing was added in the 1980s this old wing was abandoned. Eventually holes opened up in the roof, causing major damage to walls, ceilings and floors. At the urging of main street the church agreed to patch the roof and undertook a cleanup and drying out of the interior. All excess debris such as fallen plaster, glass and standing water have been removed. The interior is not heated, but air is allowed to circulate through select window openings. The building retains its original windows, light fixtures, and most woodwork and doors.



The building under construction. Ca. 1929. Former parsonage on the right.



The building in its present condition.



The auditorium stage



Auditorium from the balcony



Auditorium from the first floor.



Auditorium skylight and ceiling damage.



Gymnasium in the basement



Former institutional Kitchen space



The main staircase



Second floor landing



Condition of many upper rooms due to roof leaks and holes.



Condition of walls and ceilings throughout



Several rooms have fireplaces, and many still have original woodwork.