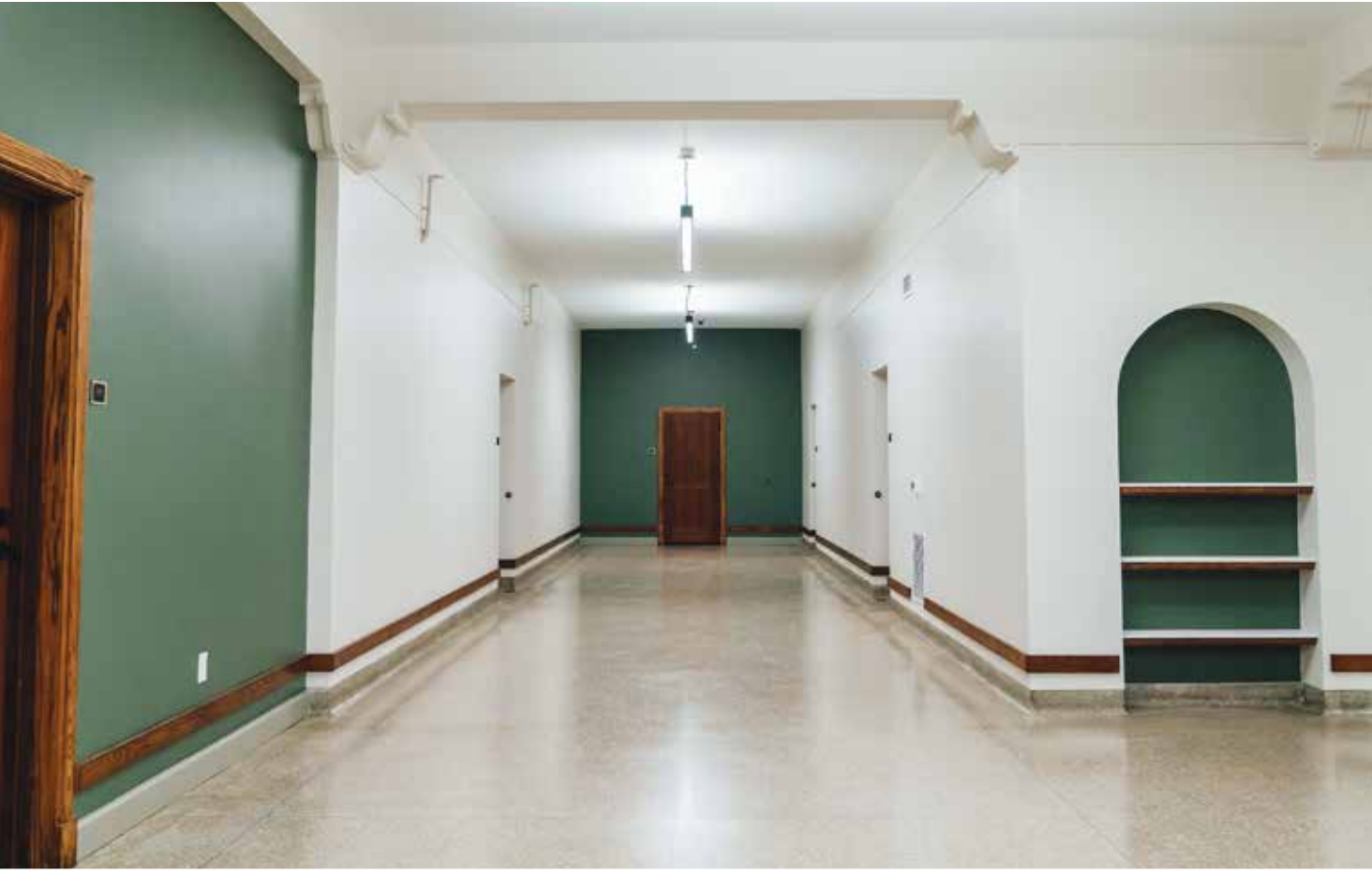


2023 Governor's Award for Historic Preservation



Emerald Flats Apartments

ICCF Community Homes; Concept Design Studio Inc.; Wolverine Building Group; Designsmiths Inc.; and Oasis Community of West Michigan

The rehabilitation of Eastern Elementary School into Emerald Flats Apartments, Grand Rapids

Eastern Elementary opened in 1929 as one of the first accessible school buildings for children with disabilities. The design featured large windows for open air and sunlight, wide ramps to accommodate movement, physiotherapy rooms and medical resources facilities. Neighbors grew concerned about the future of the school as it fell into disrepair after closing in 2008.

ICCF Community Homes purchased the property in 2015 with goals to preserve the building and find a new purpose that would serve the community's needs. After engaging with residents, ICCF worked closely with City of Grand Rapids on a pilot initiative that would create "missing middle" housing, alongside affordable housing. The extensive rehabilitation took care to preserve the unique architectural elements of the building,

including the wide ramps and hallways. A combination of nine funding sources, including Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits, Low Income Housing Tax Credits, and a Michigan Community Revitalization Program award, enabled the \$15 million rehabilitation.

The mixed-use project was completed in 2021 with 50 income-based housing units and social service office space. The school gymnasium was restored to serve as a meeting space and for community events, and the old school playground is now a public park. This adaptive reuse project celebrates the historic features of the building, meets a recognized housing need, and has taken place with intentional community benefit. Reborn as Emerald Flats Apartments, the former school site is once again an anchor of the neighborhood.

