



## Evans School ready to write the next chapter in its history

by Jill Jamieson-Nichols

Copper handrails along the central staircases are worn by hundreds of little hands, and you can almost hear the clatter of shoes against the hardwood floors.

More than three decades after the last children closed their books and left the historic Evans School, the building with its distinctive green cupola is nearly ready for its new life – either as an office building, or cultural or educational facility.

Located on Acoma Street between West 11th and West 12th avenues in Denver, the three-story, 46,467-square-foot building that has been mothballed for years has undergone a renovation and restoration to its former glory.

Named for Colorado Territorial Gov. John Evans, the Evans School was built for Denver Public Schools in 1904. Of 23 Denver school buildings designed by architect David W. Dryden, it is one of only three that remains essentially in its original form.

An investment group led by Dick Eber bought it in 1974, when the Golden Triangle still was “a fairly uncomfortable place,” and has held it through the ups and downs in the commercial real estate markets. Starting in 2005-2006, the group began a renovation process that included a new HVAC system; restoration of the oak, maple



*The historic Evans School in the Golden Triangle is ready for tenants for the first time in more than three decades.*

and fir floors; adding handicap accessibility; installing new plumbing, life, safety and electrical systems, an elevator and museum-quality up-lighting; window reconditioning; and other improvements to prepare the building for tenants. A Colorado Historical Structural Grant assisted with assessing the site’s foundation, structural systems and other components.

The classic revival building retains its original features, including 14-foot ceilings, mosaic tiles and pressed-tin ceilings in the hallways, a large balcony along the west side of the third floor, 4-by-8-foot windows, as well as a boilerplate embossed with the year of construction. The building represents “historic green” space in that it has operable windows, significant

natural light, and a large, open lawn, said Michael Eber, who is involved in the project.

NAI Shames Makovsky brokers Evan Makovsky, Darrin Revious and Todd Silverman have the solid brick building listed for lease at \$14 to \$18 per sf triple net.

“It has a really nice historic appearance. The location is excellent,” Revious said. The site, which has substantial parking, is near the Colorado History, Clyfford Still and Denver Art museums, Denver Public Library, and central to Civic Center Park, the City and County Building and Colorado Capitol.

The building comprises the largest block of available space in the midtown market, Revious said.

“You could think of the building as an office building,” said Dick Eber, adding it has an auditorium that could double as a conference or training facility, as well as a multimedia presentation space. “Law firms are thinking that the auditorium would be a wonderful place to have a moot court,” he said.

Other types of office users have considered the school, including a technology company, educational and cultural institutions, and nonprofits interested in sharing the space.

“We’re seeing a variety of interest in the property now. It would be great if we could find an educational or cultural user,” commented Revious, who added that the building potentially could include retail uses too.

While modern office buildings are designed to get the most people in a given space, “This is the antithesis of that,” said Michael Eber. The building’s large rooms open up imaginations as to, “How could I make it work, which is really exciting,” he said.

As it writes its next chapter, the Evans School remains grounded in its history. “For the right kind of organization, that is very, very empowering and really brings an important statement to a new generation, a new chapter about the Evans School,” Michael Eber said.▲