Architectural & Engineering Analysis

Made possible by the City of La Crosse, Wisconsin

North Community Library

1552 Kane Street
La Crosse, Wisconsin

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A Document Created by:

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Chapter 01:
Introduction

A. Project Background:

Purpose of the Study:

The conditions assessment report for the North Community Library will serve as the preservation manual for the structure. This professional document is being created to assist in the rehabilitation of the building as well as to record the historic significance associated with this property. Marcus Zettler, Preservation Architect, (Zettler Design Studio, LLC) and Christopher Olson (Galileo Group, LLC) have been retained to generate this report.

This document contains architectural, engineering and technical analysis of existing conditions as well as recommendations for maintenance, repairs, and restorations. On-site physical investigations were performed by trained professionals to document existing conditions and examine current and past problems with the building. The final purpose of this document is to serve as a master plan for the rehabilitation of the structure.

Project Location:

The library is a prominent one-story building with load-bearing masonry walls located at the southeast corner of Kane and Gillette Streets. The building is tucked into a residential neighborhood across from an elementary school. The building is sited in the middle of the lot and has yards on all sides. The south yard is minimal. The building has a main entrance facing west.

Statement of Significance:

The North Community Library is located in what was once known as North La Crosse. The creation of this building was delayed for many years due to the Great Depression and World War II. Its creation was the result of the need for more educational opportunities for the residents of La Crosse. Although the La Crosse Public Library had its beginnings in the late 1800s, the demand quickly grew to the point where a makeshift branch library was created just after the turn of the century. The north side finally got a dedicated library structure with the erection of this building. Currently the building is not listed on the state nor national historic register, but it is a local historic landmark. It is the author's opinion that the building has historic significance contributing to the community of La Crosse and due to the large amount of historic building fabric still extant is a candidate for being individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places. If Historic Tax Credits remain viable to the proposed renovation, they could be used to offset some of the construction costs for the project should the property be added to the National Register.

Project Team:

The City of La Crosse, Wisconsin has generously provided funding to help make this report possible. The Zettler Design Studio, LLC and Galileo Group, LLC have undertaken the task of compiling this architecture, engineering and historic analysis for the North Community Library. Due to the project complexity, areas of specialized knowledge and skill were required to complete this document.

B. Project Scope:

Project Extents:

The purpose of this report is to analyze both the exterior and interior of the North Community Library. This includes the basement and main floor. The building occupies most of the site and has a paved parking area east of the building, connecting to the public alley. The property fronts on Kane Street to the west and Gilette Street to the north. Information was gathered using visual observations. Invasive testing was not in the scope of this project. As restoration/ rehabilitation commences, concealed conditions will be discovered and will require either additional testing or work. It is not possible to predict all situations that will be encountered throughout a project, which is why it is extremely important to always have a construction contingency. Hazardous material testing was not in the scope of work for this document, said materials may be encountered during or prior to construction. It is recommended that hazardous material testing be performed by licensed professionals prior to work beginning on any project.

C. Project Methodology:

Investigation Methods:

The purpose of this research was to assemble an accurate depiction of the current conditions for the building. The scope of work for this report was divided into divisions.

Observations of the actual building were made in person using a combination of existing scaled drawings and photographs. These observations focused not only on documenting the actual physical conditions of the building, but also looked for clues as to how the building had evolved over time, and for possible ways to correct problems with the building. Invasive testing was not in the scope of this report.

Recommended Treatment Approach:

It is recommended that the building be restored on the exterior and rehabilitated on the interior. The main floor could be rehabilitated into a restaurant, gathering space, office space, residential, or even retail. The building is currently a library and has been very well maintained over the years by city maintenance staff. There are some smaller areas of water infiltration that need to be addressed. This property retains a very good amount of historic building fabric, especially on the main floor. Many of the original furnishings and built-in shelving still remain as well. If the project is divided into phases, the first phase should make all necessary exterior repairs and rehabilitate the main floor. The later phase(s) would focus on improving the basement and site. The extent of interior work will depend on budget, but it will likely be extensive depending on what use is planned. The building systems for the most part have been maintained and still have some serviceable life remaining. The building's exterior has had minimal changes with the exception of the windows. It would be nice to go back to the original leaded windows with some kind of storm window for energy efficiency, but the existing windows still appear to be in fair condition. A new accessible entry from the parking lot would be a great benefit.

Reference Documents and Standards:

The following documents and standards were used to determine treatment approaches to the structure:

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties

2021 International Building Code

2021 International Existing Building Code

American National Standards Institute (ANSI) - Accessibility Guidelines

Wisconsin Administrative Code

Recommendations for Future Work:

With much of the work scheduled to be completed in one larger phase, future work will primarily consist of ongoing maintenance and possible basement upgrades. Any active deterioration, such as roof leaks, must be repaired. The exterior masonry will also require periodic tuck-pointing after this phase has been completed. Wood trim will need to be repainted. Stucco will need periodic repairs. A detailed description of this and the other work to be accomplished is provided in the "Conceptual Design" chapter. The roof and foundation are the most important components of a building to keep it standing. The roof has been maintained over the years, but may have some active leaks. The foundation looks to have been maintained very well.

It is important to remember that the final phase (building maintenance) continues for the life of the building.

End Notes:

1. "Property Record – 1552 Kane Street, La Crosse, WI." #34574 Architecture and History Inventory – Wisconsin Historical Society. www.wisconsinhistory.org

Chapter 02:
Building Documentation

A. Interpretive Concept:

In the preservation of historic properties there are seven basic approaches that can be utilized. One approach may be dominant in a particular project; however, many times elements from multiple approaches are applied simultaneously to a given project. The seven approaches to historic preservation are as follows:

Preservation - means to keep the building looking as it does today. This approach arrests further deterioration of the structure. Changes that have occurred over time are allowed to remain in their current state.

Restoration - is far more intensive than preservation. In restoration, a period of significance is chosen, and the building is returned to the way it looked at that moment in time. Features added after this period are removed and any features that were associated with the structure at that period may be recreated and incorporated back into the structure. Damaged elements still in existence are repaired and brought back to their original condition.

Rehabilitation - changes the historic use of a structure to give the building a new occupancy while retaining much of its historic integrity. This approach is often much less sympathetic to the building than the above approaches.

Reconstruction - recreates an entire structure, or portions thereof, that has been destroyed or demolished. Detailed research and craftsmanship are critical when reconstructing any element to try to make it look authentic.

Replication - creates an additional copy of an existing structure, or portion thereof. Many times, this copy is located in a different location.

Conservation - protects the existing features of a historic structure. Work is often carried out to protect and correct deterioration to the existing structure.

Additions - are often needed to accommodate changing needs in the structure. All additions should be clearly differentiated from the historic structure.

The North Community Library has undergone only a few changes throughout the years. It has remained remarkably intact. The largest change was the removal of the original leaded glass windows. Modern double-pane insert windows were installed circa 2007. The building's use as a library has been maintained to the time of this report. The interior still has original furnishings, book shelves, and benches. The proposed work on the building will now shift to a **Restoration** method for the exterior and **Rehabilitation** method for the interior spaces. There will be some exterior rehabilitation to ensure that the building will function more efficiently to serve a new use. Much of the exterior rehabilitation will be accomplished by maintaining windows such as recaulking the perimeter, cleaning and repainting wood trim and stucco and minor tuckpointing of mortar joints. Additional code compliant accessibility upgrades will be required. The period of restoration for the project will be ca. 1942 since so little has changed from the building's completion until the present times.

The building is a piece of La Crosse's history and is an important landmark to the northside. This structure is very prominent, being one of the few civic structures on the northside. The structure is highly visible from Gillette Street. This building has a special charm with its Tudor Revival design and smaller scale that harmonizes with the neighborhood around it. The building was well constructed and has served the community well over the past eighty-four years. The building has great

redevelopment potential, especially uses that can take advantage of a large open space with ample daylighting.

B. Architectural Description:

The methods used to obtain information about the existing building and site were primarily done through physical observation and documentation. Invasive testing and analysis were not in the scope of this document. Photography and limited measurements with hand measuring devices were used to analyze the structure. No drawings were created for the scope of this report. All field notes were compiled from February 2026 through March 2026.

The North Community Library is a one-story building with masonry exterior walls, a concrete floor structure and wood-framed roof. The roof is structured with dimensional rafters utilizing collar ties and cross bracing. The roof has a very complex shape, but the basic layout has two gables forming a "T" in plan. The main gable runs north-south and has the ridge of the gable clipped with a flat roof. The secondary gable runs east-west and faces Gillette Street to the north. The roof also has secondary gables, one over the main entry facing west and a second, smaller gable facing west at the south end of the building. There is a south facing gable next to the chimney. The east side of the roof has three low dormers and there is another dormer facing south. The back part of the library has two low flat roof areas. The foundation is constructed of cast-in-place concrete walls. These walls show the imprint of wood plank formwork. Plywood was not yet a common material for use in forming concrete. The building facades were designed in the English (Tudor) Revival Style, and are largely unchanged except for the replacement windows. The brickwork is laid in a running bond pattern with a header row every sixth course. The brick is a hard modern brick that has a blend ranging from deep reds to browns. Windows and doors are simple punched openings. Most openings have a flat steel lintel supporting brick above and the bottom of openings is finished with a limestone lug sill. There are a few openings that are emphasized to bring interest to the facade. The main one is the front doors, they are located in a deeply recessed opening surrounded by limestone with a Tudor (3-hinged) Arch. There is a smaller niche to the left (north) of the doors with the name of the library inscribed. Above the doors is an oriel window opening into the attic. It has three small windows and is capped by a swooping copper roof. The main gable on the north of the composition has a large trio of windows with transoms. This opening is framed by a limestone surround on all sides and is capped by a protruding gable with another trio of windows. This gable is cantilevered out from the façade and held by wood brackets. The rest of the projection is finished with stucco and wood trim giving it a half-timbered look. The south gable has a trio of windows with a limestone surround similar to the north windows. The front doors appear to be original, but the windows are modern replacement units that have simulated divided lites (SDL) approximating the leaded glass look.

The north side of the building has five punched openings each having a trio of windows with simple brick surrounds and limestone lug sills. The main gable stops about three-quarters of the way back on the building. A low, flat roofed area with no windows makes up the remainder of the facade.

The east side of the building is very utilitarian. The part of the building visible from the alley has a section projecting out from the main building mass as described in the previous paragraph. It has a single punched opening with a pair of windows. The rest of the façade keeps a low profile with a flat roof. There are three single punched openings south of the projection. Next to these windows is a pair of entry doors with a wood framed canopy finished with a copper roof. These doors have a small transom above. There are three more

small punched openings, a larger punched opening with a pair of windows and a single door at the corner of the building. This door is lower than the other doors on the building and opens to a stair leading directly to the basement. This door also has a canopy similar to the other one. Above the low slung portion of the building, three dormers are visible on the main gable and a fourth on the north-south gable. These dormers have a single opening with a trio of windows and a copper roof. There is a strange projecting hip at the south end of the building.

The south end of the building is very close to the lot line. There are two small punched openings near the southeast corner of the building, a larger punched opening with a pair of windows and a larger punched opening with limestone surround and a trio of windows similar to the small gabled opening at the southwest corner of the library. This façade also has a large masonry chimney for the first floor fireplace.

The library has a partial basement. The main access is from a stair nearly centered from north to south by the back doors of the building. To the south of this stair is a meeting room with some high windows. Next to the meeting room at the far south end of the building is a second concrete stair leading directly to the exterior. To the west of the stairs and meeting room are various mechanical rooms. Under the north section of the building is a partially excavated storage space. There is a large stone outcropping and remnants of what is probably the foundation of the house that was previously on the site. The floors throughout the basement are mostly poured concrete except for the meeting rooms which have carpeting. The first-floor structure is exposed in many locations. It is a one-way concrete joist system with hollow clay tile pans.

The first floor retains a high degree of historic integrity. The historic book shelves, benches and fireplace have changed little since the building opened. Much of the woodwork is oak with a rich golden stain. Tapered faux beams define different spaces within the library while allowing the plan to remain open. The main space has a large tray ceiling with faux beams of plaster painted to look like wood. The floor has been updated over the years and most of it is either carpet or tile. Most original ceilings are plaster and appear to be in fairly good condition. Even the metal enameled kitchenette is still in place. One thing that will be an issue for any new use is the lack of an accessible restroom(s).

This section contains photographs of the building's exterior. Actual notes and recommendations are provided in the "Building Documentation" section.

Figure 02 - West Elevation, North Community Library (2026).

Figure 03 – North Elevation, North Community Library (2026).

Figure 04 - East Elevation, North Community Library (2026).

Figure 05 - South and West Elevations, North Community Library (2026).

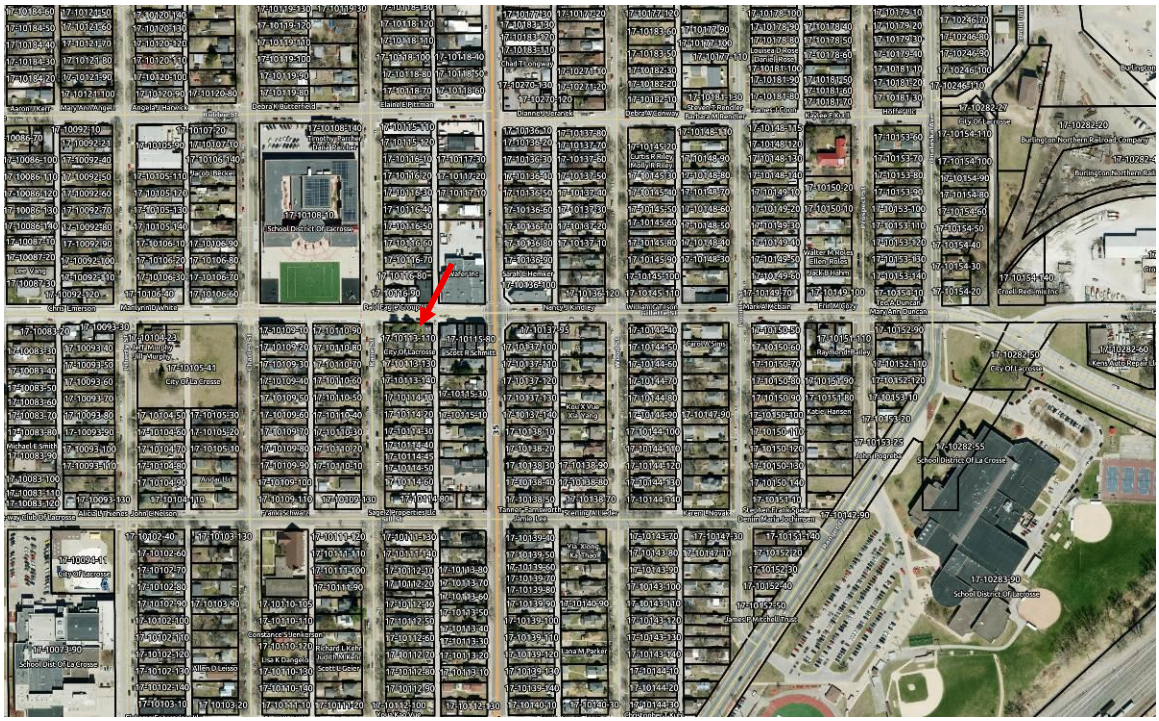

Figure 06 – Aerial Photo (2026) Courtesy of La Crosse County.

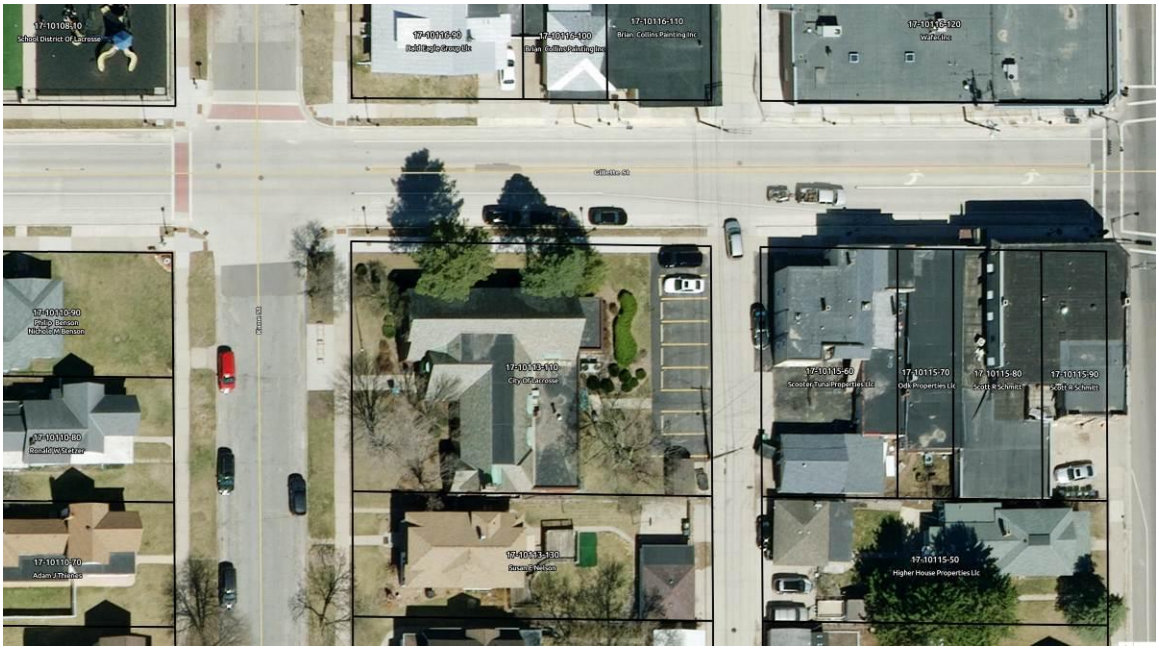

Figure 07 – Aerial Photo (2026) Courtesy of La Crosse County.

C. Building Documentation:

This section provides a detailed description of the North Community Library. Issues and recommendations are also provided where appropriate.

Although much of the building was given a very thorough visual inspection, portions were not accessible. These areas include: parts of the attic spaces, the majority of roof areas, the crawl spaces in the basement and behind shelving. Visual inspections of these portions of the building were made to the highest level allowable by existing conditions.

This section provides an assessment of conditions as they appeared at the time the data was compiled. Due to ongoing changes to the conditions present at the building, the existing conditions should be re-evaluated prior to beginning any work. These observations should be noted and included as an appendix to this report.

The next pages are organized in the following order: site, elevations, roof, and interiors.

Definitions of Conditions:
On the following pages, the conditions of various building components are rated on a scale of good to very poor. The definitions of these conditions are as follows:

Good: No work is needed on these items; they should be preserved in their current condition.

Fair: No work is needed at this time. The condition of these items should be monitored from time to time to ensure that they are not deteriorating further.

Poor: Work is needed on these items. Begin planning to restore or replace these items based on the recommendations in this report.

Very Poor: Work must be done to correct problems on these items as soon as possible.

Unknown: Conditions were not able to be determined at the time of this report.

BUILDING CONDITION ASSESSMENT – EXTERIOR

SITE:

VISIBILITY:
The site has good visibility from Gillette Street, but is not visible from George Street. The building is on the corner of Gillette and Kane Streets. The library occupies most of the site and is shifted to the south side of the lot. There is alley access on the east side of the building with a small parking lot. The building is set back on the west and north sides allowing for yards that are similar in depth to the residential structures in the neighborhood. The south yard is very small with a fence separating it from the neighboring house.

ACCESS:
The main access to this property is from the west (Kane Street). There is a concrete walk leading to a double entry door. The concrete walk sloped up to be level with the stoop to create an accessible entry. The pair of doors have leaves that are only about thirty inches wide each, but there are dual automatic door operators at the entry. The pair of doors at the back of the building has a stoop with concrete steps leading down to the parking area. These doors open to a back hall that contains the main stair to the basement. The door at the southeast corner of the building has its threshold slightly below grade. There are concrete landscaping blocks piled around it to hold the earth back. None of the entry points to the building fully comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), but the front door is the closest. The public alley is paved and runs north-south. The parking is directly off the alley and has eight spaces.

GRADING:
The building is on the east side of Kane Street. The grade gently slopes up to the front door of the library and then slopes down to the alley on the east. The overall grading of the area has minimal slopes.

LANDSCAPING:
The landscaping is well maintained at the site. There are mature trees on the east, west and north sides of the building. There is a zone of river rock around the building creating an area for foundation plantings. There is a mix of deciduous and evergreen shrubs in these planting beds. At the northwest corner of the site is a sign with more shrubs surrounding it. Lawn areas separate the landscaped areas from the sidewalk and parking lot.

Figure 08 – Front entry (2026).


Figure 09 – Parking area at alley (2026).

WEST ELEVATION:

FOUNDATION:
The foundation at the west facade of the building is fully below grade. The brick from the walls runs down below the level of the landscaping rock. This wall is constructed of cast-in-place concrete. No dampness was noticed in the basement at the time of this report. This wall is holding up well and is in fair-to-good condition.

WALLS:
The above-grade walls on the west facade of the building are in fair-to-good condition. The brick shows little to no signs of deterioration, but sections of wall show signs of moisture saturation near grade. This is mostly caused by melting snow and backsplash from water running off the roof. Eventually, rising damp and backsplash from the roof will erode the mortar joints and increase the chances for brick spalling during freeze-thaw cycles. Adding gutters and creating a better slope away from the building would correct this situation. The limestone has held up very well and is in fair-to-good condition.

DOORS AND WINDOWS:
The stained wood entry doors appear to be original and have been well preserved over time. The brass hardware has patinaed gracefully over the years. This entry adds a great amount of historic character to the building. The doors operate well and the entire system is in fair-to-good condition. The windows are less than twenty years old. They have replaced earlier leaded glass windows. The loss of historic building fabric is unfortunate, but the new double-glazed windows are in fair condition. They loosely resemble the original windows with simulated divided lites. As long as the glazing seals hold, the windows still have years of serviceable life left. The sealant used around doors and windows appears to have been installed within the last few years and is a bright white color. When the sealant begins to fail, it would be good to replace it with a more compatible color.

Figure 10 – Overall view of the west facade (2026).

Figure 11 – Water runs off the roof, splashes at grade and saturates the walls (2026).

Figure 12 – Original front doors deeply recessed in the wall (2026).

STUCCO AND TRIM:
The windows have wood trim that is in fair-to-poor condition, especially on the faux half-timbered gable and the oriel window above the entry. Paint is flaking and there are early signs of rot starting on some of the members. If repairs are done in the next year or two, the damage will be minimal, but if it is ignored, the repair costs will grow significantly. The stucco appears to be in fair condition, but if the adjacent wood rots, water will penetrate behind the stucco and cause problems. At a minimum the trim should be restored and a new bead of sealant installed at all joints between the stucco and wood. It should also be noted that the nails holding the wood trim have significantly rusted and will need to be replaced. This is evident by the rust stains on the face of the wood trim.

Figure 13 – Oriel window has peeling paint and modern replacement windows (2026).

ROOF:
The roof is mostly in fair condition with localized areas needing repairs. Slate roofs often have a life span of about one-hundred years. Many times, the slate is still in good condition after a century, but the fasteners deteriorate and fail causing the individual slate shingles to become loose and fall out. There were some areas of loose slate shingles noted, but most of the roof appears to be holding up well. Maintenance staff informed the author that roofing repairs had recently been done on the flat roof areas of the building and are still under warranty. The copper valley flashing has patinaed, but is holding up. This roof also has snow-dogs to hold back snow from crashing off the roof. The biggest deficiency with the roof is that there are no gutters or downspouts.

Figure 14 – Peeling paint and rusted nails are evident on the trim at the gable (2026).

OTHER:
On the right (south) side of the entry door is a book drop slot in fair condition. There is a sconce that may be original, a push plate for the door operator, and some modern signs. These items all appear to be in fair condition.

Figure 15 – The stucco and trim have exquisite detail, notice the rope mould and brackets (2026).

NORTH ELEVATION:

FOUNDATION:
The foundation on the north side of the building is covered by grade. On the interior, the poured concrete wall is visible and in fair-to-good condition. This side of the building is only partially excavated. There are remnants of a limestone foundation within the basement, probably from the house that previously occupied the site. There is also a large rock ledge in the basement that the foundation wall bears on.

WALLS:
The north wall of the library is in fair condition. There were dark spots near grade indicating moisture infiltration. There is also ivy growing on this wall. As long as it is the type of ivy that attaches to the surface of the masonry it is of little concern; however, if it is the aggressive type of ivy that sends tendrils into the wall, it should be removed. This wall is very utilitarian and only has five punched openings. The rear part of the building has a lower wall with two courses of slightly corbelled brick. The brick bonding pattern is the same as the west facade.

DOORS AND WINDOWS:
All five of the window openings have modern double-glazed window inserts installed. These windows have some minimal SDL to approximate the leaded glass windows that were removed. Each opening has three fixed window units. There is a flat steel header across the top with no special brick detailing. All openings have a limestone lug sill with a drip edge. No rust or other deterioration was noted at the time of this report. The windows appear to be in fair condition. The north façade of the building has no door openings.

Figure 16 – Overall view of the north façade looking southwest (2026).

Figure 17 – The darker masonry near grade has been saturated with moisture (2026).

Figure 18 – The face brick runs below grade, notice the ivy (2026).

EAST ELEVATION:

FOUNDATION:
Grade is lower on the east side of the building. The only location where the concrete foundations are visible are in the window wells flanking the back pair of entry doors. The window wells are cast concrete with a short metal fence to keep people out. All concrete appears to be in fair condition, the metal fence is in poor condition and needs to be repainted.

WALLS:
The east walls are mostly in fair condition with isolated areas in poor condition. These walls have the same brick configuration as the other facades. It looks like there may have been some water infiltration in the past just below the line of the flat roof. The mortar joints have been repointed with a lighter mortar and there is a slight bulge in the masonry. This is indicative of either water freezing and pushing the bricks out, or water rusting steel in the wall causing it to push the bricks out. The repairs do not look recent, so the problem may have been corrected. The electrical service drop is just north of the back doors. If possible, it would be better to convert the service to underground. The high walls behind the flat roof were not accessible and could not be fully evaluated for this study.

DOORS AND WINDOWS:
There are two door openings on the east façade, one at the midpoint of the façade and one at the southeast corner. The middle entry has a pair of modern doors that appear to have a fiberglass cladding, with a wood transom above. These doors are in fair condition. The south door is a wood rail and stile door, possibly original, and is in fair-to-poor condition. At a minimum it needs to be repainted. The windows are all modern replacement inserts that are in fair condition.

Figure 19 – Overall view of the east facade (2026).

Figure 20 – Grade is above the threshold for the door leading to the basement (2026).

Figure 21 – Previous water infiltration may have rusted the steel lintel, pushing the bricks out of alignment(2026).

SOUTH ELEVATION:

FOUNDATION:
The foundation on this side of the building is below grade and in fair condition. There was a small area of moisture noted on the wall at the south stair. It is unknown if this was condensation from a mechanical/plumbing line or a small amount of water getting through the wall.

WALLS:
For the most part, the brick is in fair condition. There is a slight displacement of brick at the window heads/roof line. This area was repaired and is in a similar condition to the east facade. The chimney shows signs of mortar erosion and should have some minor tuckpointing done. The type of ivy on this wall should be verified to see if it is the surface attaching type or the penetrating type.

DOORS AND WINDOWS:
The windows on this façade are modern inserts like the rest of the building. These windows are in fair condition. There are no doors on this side of the building. The PVC intake/exhaust appears to be newer and is in fair condition.

OTHER:
The fence is very close to the building and in fair to poor condition. This fence will be a challenge if any work is done on this façade.

Figure 22 – Previous masonry repairs are evident at the window heads (2026).

Figure 23 – Intake and exhaust for the HVAC are in a window well (2026).

Figure 24 – The fence restricts access to the south facade (2026).

ROOF:

ROOFING:
The roof of the library has four sections. Access was limited to viewing the roof from the ground and interior windows. The main roof has intersection gables in a "T" shape with the main gable running north-south and the secondary gable running east-west. There are minor gables next to the upper leg of the "T" facing west, at the bottom of the "T" facing west and facing south on the bottom of the "T". All gable sections are roofed with slate shingles. Most of the roofs are in fair condition, but small sections need repairs. A few broken/missing slates were noted at the time of this report. The flashing appears to be copper and is holding up well in most locations. The dormers on the back of the building are finished with copper roofs as are the canopies for the back doors and the oriel window above the main entry. In areas where the wall meets a roof there is copper step flashing. Although modern standards would have a taller step flashing in most circumstances, the existing flashing appears to be keeping the water out. Maintenance staff stated that there was a small leak near the southwest corner of the building, this may be coming in through a broken ridge slate and missing metal cap.

The main north-south gable is clipped and capped by a flat roof covered with EPDM. Maintenance staff said there were leaks that have recently been repaired in this section. The third section or roof is a section of flat EPDM roofing at the northeast corner of the building. This roof did not show signs of leaking and is in fair condition. The final section of roof is also a flat EPDM system located at the east side of the building. There is quite a bit of debris on the roof which may indicate that it drains slowly, but no leaks were noted.

DRAINAGE:
There are no gutters on the building. This is problematic because it allows storm water to run off the building, saturating the soil and splashing back against the masonry. The gables on the roof also create pinch points where water is concentrated onto a small area of roof. The most concentrated spot is just to the north of the entry. The flat roof sections on the east have roof drains and overflow scuppers, discharging storm water to grade.

Figure 25 – Copper valley and step flashing is used to channel water off the roof (2026).

Figure 26 – The ridge on the dormer is damaged, possibly letting in water (2026).

Figure 27 – Damaged and missing slate shingle should be replaced (2026).

BUILDING CONDITION ASSESSMENT – INTERIOR

BASEMENT:

FLOOR:
The existing floor in the basement is a mixture of unfinished and painted concrete, carpet and dirt. The concrete is in fair condition while the carpet is in poor condition.

WALLS:
The foundation walls in the library are poured-in-place concrete. Mechanical rooms have painted walls while the storage areas have unfinished concrete. The middle stair and two meeting rooms have painted plaster over the concrete. The meeting rooms also have a wood picture rail. Most walls in the basement are in fair to good condition. There was one small area of moisture noted on the south wall by the south stair.

A unique feature of this building is how the north section of the basement was built around the existing house foundation. There is a rock ledge immediately east of the old foundation wall. The west and north ends of the basement are not fully excavated. There are small access holes through the walls. The crawl spaces have dirt floors, ductwork, pieces of doors, cabinets and broken beer bottles.

CEILING:
The ceilings throughout the basement are a mixture of plaster, wood fiber acoustic ceiling tile, and the exposed concrete floor structure. The plaster is in fair-to-good condition in most locations; however, there are a few sections in the mechanical areas that have been damaged by duct and pipe hangers. The wood fiber ceiling tiles are in fair condition, but have been painted thus losing their acoustic benefits. The exposed concrete joist floor system is in fair-to-good condition. Very few of the hollow clay tile pans have been damaged.

Figure 28 – Large meeting room in basement, notice bench at east wall (2026).

Figure 29 – Bedrock outcropping in north section of basement (2026).

Figure 30 – North section of basement, notice old foundation wall & exposed concrete floor structure at ceiling (2026).

STRUCTURAL FRAMING:
As mentioned above, the concrete joist floor system is in fair-to-good condition. Not all crawl spaces were accessed, but where the floor system was visible, no exposed or rusted rebar was observed. The joists have a logical layout spanning from bearing wall to bearing wall. No post and beam bearing lines were noted.

STAIRS:
The basement has two stairs, a center stair leading up to the hall by the back door and a south stair leading directly to the exterior. The center stair is constructed out of steel with concrete pans for the treads while the south stair is poured concrete. Both stairs are steeper than current codes allow, but they are grandfathered unless significantly altered. The center stair has two handrails and a guardrail at the top while the south stair has only one handrail. The guardrail is only 36" high, modern codes require 42" for buildings open to the public. Since the building is historic, the guard can remain with permission by the AHJ – building inspector. The center stair may be wide enough to meet modern code depending on the occupancy of the basement. The south stair is very narrow

OTHER:
There are quite a few remnants in the basement. In addition to doors and cabinets, there is a stack or extra slate shingles that can be used to repair the roof. These should not be discarded even if the building is sold.

Figure 31 – Attic stock of slate roof shingles (2026).

Figure 32 – Underside of concrete floor joist system (2026)

Figure 33 – Iron-clad door opening into mechanical room (2026).

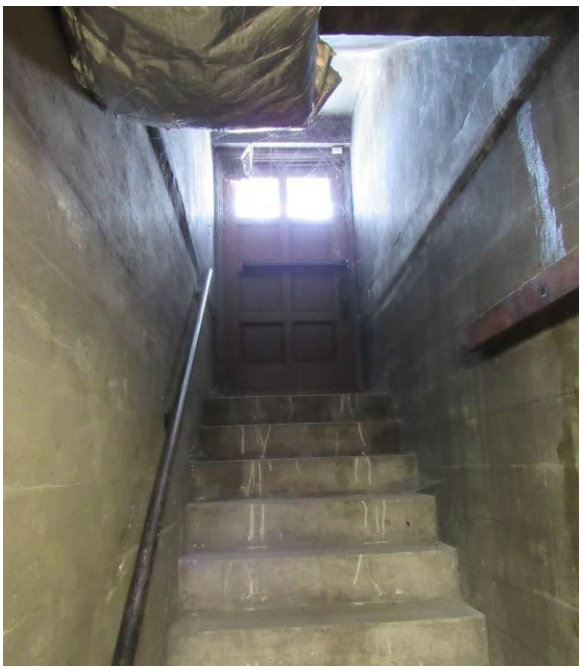

Figure 34 – South stair leading to the exterior (2026).

FIRST FLOOR:

FLOOR:
The first floor has a mixture of flooring. Most locations have carpet that is in poor condition. The entry, circulation desk area and newer restrooms have ceramic tile that is in fair condition. The original restroom has what appears to be 9x9 tile. These should be tested for asbestos if they have not already been tested. Most of the flooring is worn and should be replaced.

WALL BASE:
A significant amount of the original wood wall base is extant. Unfortunately, in most locations vinyl base has been glued over the wood. The vinyl base is in fair to poor condition. The two newer restrooms have ceramic tile base in fair condition.

WALLS:
The walls for this building are either plaster applied directly to masonry, or plaster applied to frame construction. Both types of walls are in fair condition. The interior has been repainted multiple times, most recently the inside walls have been painted mostly white. Older photos illustrate that the main library was once a warm cream/buff color which complimented the woodwork. It does not appear that any interior wall surfaces need immediate repair.

CEILING:
The first floor has two main types of ceilings, vaulted and flat. The vaulted ceilings are finished with plaster and are in mostly fair condition. Peeling paint was observed on some of the faux plaster beams. This could be an issue where different types of paint were used to create the faux wood effect and the paint types did not bond properly. The flat ceilings are in fair condition. These ceilings are also finished with plaster.

Figure 35 – The main reading room looking south (2026).

Figure 36 – The main reading room looking west (2026).

Figure 37 – Staff room at the back of the library (2026).

DOORS/WINDOWS:
The majority of the doors on the first floor are wood rail and stile doors and are probably original. The back doors have been replaced with modern clad doors. The wood doors have been finished with a honey colored stain and are in fair condition. Much of the original trim remains. There are two main issues with the existing doors: many of them still have door knobs instead of levers, and some of them are too narrow to meet current code. The windows have all been replaced with modern insert units. The simulated divided lites are noticeably different, but the existing units are in fair condition.

BUILT-INS:
The library retains most of its original shelving and built-in benches. This woodwork is in fair-to-good condition in most locations. There are a few benches located around the library, placed at windows. The benches have cushions that are not original, but are in fair condition. One very important thing to note is that the book shelves serve as chases for the mechanical ductwork. There are grates incorporated into the extended toe kicks all around the library. The main library space has a wood picture rail at the joint were the sloped vaulted ceiling meets the top of the walls.

STAIRS:
The main stair to the basement is of steel construction with concrete treads. The treads are currently covered with carpet. The stair is open to the back hall and is protected by a steel guard rail. The stairs are in fair-to-good condition with the exception of the carpet. Depending on the future use of the building, the stair may be allowed to remain open.

Figure 38 – The front doors have auto-operators to try and meet ADA req's (2026).

Figure 39 – Steel stairs to the basement meeting rooms and mechanical (2026).

BUILDING SYSTEMS:
As mentioned earlier, the mechanical (HVAC) ductwork is incorporated into the book shelves. There are larger grilles high on the walls and in the benches. The grilles are in fair to good condition. The lighting has been updated over the years, but there may be older wiring still in service. Floor outlets appeared to be older in some locations. The plumbing appears to work, but none of the restrooms are accessible.

ACCESSIBILITY:
The front doors are only 30" wide, but both have an auto-operator. Doors should be 36" wide to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), but these are the original front doors so they should remain. It would be better to have an accessible entry at the rear of the building connecting to the parking lot. The restrooms are not ADA compliant either. Both doors still have door knobs. The restrooms do not have vertical grab bars and the sinks may be in the required clear floor space for the toilets.

OTHER:
The fireplace had wood in it, but it is unknown if it is still operable. At a minimum, the chimney should be inspected and cleaned before it is used. The stone surround on the fireplace has been painted, this paint should be removed. The brick around the stone is in fair-to-good condition.

Figure 40 – Window benches double as duct chases (2026).

Figure 41 – The restrooms do not appear to be large enough to comply with current ADA requirements (2026).

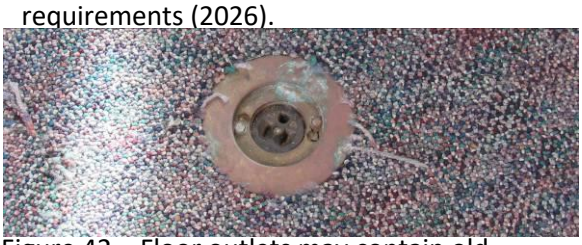

Figure 42 – Floor outlets may contain old wiring (2026).

Figure 43 – The original kitchenette is still in the staff break area (2026).

ATTIC:

FLOOR:
The attic is a utilitarian space. There are wood planks laid over the ceiling rafters around the ladder access, no other areas have flooring, only open ceiling joists. The condition of the floor is poor, but would only be upgraded for access to maintenance personnel.

WALL BASE:
There is no wall base.

WALLS:
The walls are exposed masonry. The construction of the walls can be seen in the attic. The masonry walls are a mixture of brick and hollow clay tile in fair condition.

CEILING:
The ceiling is unfinished. Rafters and wood plank decking are exposed. Many locations have water staining, but it appears that there are only a few areas that have active leaks. Maintenance stated that portions of the roof were repaired over the last couple of years. The framing and roof deck are in fair condition in most locations. Depending on how long the leaks were active, there may be isolated areas in poor condition.

OTHER:
The windows into the attic are modern replacements matching the first floor. They are in fair condition. Much of the attic has insulation, but not enough to meet modern standards. There is batt insulation between ceiling joists. Some newspapers were discovered on top of the insulation. They date from the 1950s, it is unknown if this indicates the date the insulation was installed, or if the newspapers were left up there for some other reason. The insulation is in poor condition.

Figure 44 – The access scuttle is next to the oriel window (2026).

Figure 45 – Most of the attic has exposed roof structure with insulation below (2026).

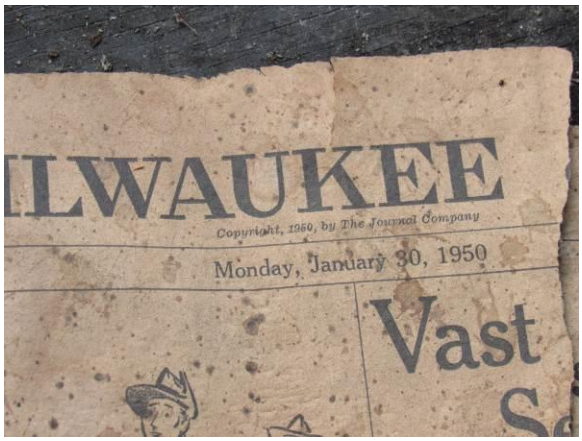

Figure 46 – Newspapers from the 1950s were discovered on the insulation (2026).

Chapter 03:

Code and Zoning Analysis

A. Building Code Analysis:

Applicable Code:

A full code review was not in the scope of this report; however, the following is a brief outline of some code items that will apply to any construction projects for this building. The amended code adopted by the State of Wisconsin at the time of this report was the 2021 International Building Code (IBC) and the 2021 International Existing Building Code (IEBC).

Section 202 of the IBC and Chapters 2 and 6 of the IEBC list the following definitions:

- **Alteration**: Any construction or renovation to an existing structure other than a repair or addition. Alterations are classified as Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3.

- **Level 1** alterations include the removal and replacement or the covering of existing materials, elements, equipment, or fixtures using new materials, elements, equipment, or fixtures that serve the same purpose.

- **Level 2** alterations include the reconfiguration of space, the addition or elimination of any door or window, the reconfiguration or extension of any system, or the installation of any equipment.

- **Level 3** alterations apply where the work area exceeds 50 percent of the aggregate area of the building.

- **Existing Building**: A building erected prior to the date of adoption of the appropriate code, or one for which a legal building permit has been issued.

- **Historic Building**: Any building or structure that is listed in the State or National Register of Historic Places; designated as historic under an applicable local or state designation law; certified as a contributing resource within a National Register, State designated or locally designated historic district; or certified as eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places by the State Historic Preservation Officer or the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places.

- **Rehabilitation**: Any work, as described by the categories of work defined herein, undertaken in an existing building.

- **Repair**: The reconstruction, replacement or renewal of any part of an existing building for the purpose of its maintenance or to correct damage.

- **Technically Infeasible:** An alteration of a facility that has little likelihood of being accomplished because the existing structural conditions require the removal or alteration of a load-bearing member that is an essential part of the structural frame or because other existing physical or site constraints prohibit modification or addition of elements, spaces, or features which are in full and strict compliance with the minimum requirements for new construction and

which are necessary to provide accessibility.

Current Code Classifications:

Occupancy Type:
The North Community Library has always had Group A-3 - Assembly. The basement was primarily used for mechanical, storage and meeting space; therefore, is a mix of Groups A-3 and S-1 (Storage – Moderate Hazard) occupancies. Any changes to the use of the basement will be considered a "Change of Occupancy" in the code. The main floor of the library is predominantly Assembly. There are small portions of the first floor dedicated to staff use, like the office and lounge areas. These would be considered accessory uses to the main Assembly.

If this building is converted to a different use, it will have to be evaluated for the new occupancy. For example, if the library is converted into a restaurant or a banquet hall, it would become an A-2 Assembly. These changes have different code requirements and need to be evaluated on a case by case basis.

Level of Alteration:
If a new use goes into the library building it will need some modifications. The two most common types of alteration are Level 2 and Level 3. The Level 2 alteration would be triggered if a single wall or door is moved, added or removed. It is also triggered if restrooms are updated or the mechanical system is modified. The Level 3 alteration is triggered when 50% or more of the building is in the work area. If most of the building is renovated, then work will most likely be classified as a Level 3 Alteration.

Construction Type:
This building is Type III-B – Unprotected, which means the building has 2-hour fire-rated exterior masonry walls (windows and doors excluded) and any type of permitted construction on the interior and roof, including wood framing. Party walls are not anticipated since the building is set back from the property line on all sides. There may need to be fire barriers if the building needs to have separated uses.

IBC Chapter 4 Section 420 requires that all dwelling units have a fire separation from common spaces and other dwelling units. Most situations require a 1-hour fire separation in sprinklered buildings unless exceptions in the code are met to reduce the fire rating.

The following was taken from Tables in Chapter 5 of the 2021 IBC.

Allowable Height and Area:
Group A-3 buildings are allowed to be 2 stories above grade plane without fire sprinklers and 3 stories with fire sprinklers and have a maximum height of 55' unsprinklered and 75' with fire sprinklers. The maximum allowable building footprint is 9,500 square feet without fire sprinklers. The gross building footprint for this building is under 5,000 square feet. Even if the basement square footage were added, the area would still be under 9,500 square feet. If multiple commercial uses would move into the building, then a mixed-use situation is created. The actual allowable area must be calculated using formulas provided in the IBC. This

calculation is not in the scope of this report because final square footages of each occupancy have not been established. To comply, the ratio of the formula must meet defined requirements in the code.

Fire Separation:
The following are hypothetical mixes in the building which will impact the fire separation requirements. The fire separation requirements between Group A (Assembly) and Group R (Residential) need to have a one-hour fire separation from other uses if in a sprinklered building and two hours in a non-sprinklered building. (The two hour non-sprinklered exception for Residential is in the code for buildings utilizing some other exceptions such as a residential unit in existence before the project begins, a single commercial and a single residential tenant, or a performance code compliance.) This means if residential uses are inserted into the building, those areas will need to have a fire separation from the rest of the building. If a new assembly use would take some of the first floor or basement spaces, it may not trigger a NFPA 13 fire sprinkler, but could require additional fire separations. The existing stairs only connect the first floor to the basement. If they are part of non-separated uses they do not need a fire rating, but if different tenants with different occupancy types move into the building the stairs may need to have a fire separation. All conditions in the building only connect three stories or less so the one-hour fire rating requirement will be predominant where separations are required.

Fire Sprinklers:
The building currently does not have a fire sprinkler system If three or more residential units or one commercial and two residential units are created, then the entire building will be required to have a fire sprinkler system installed (NFPA 13 and/or NFPA 13R).

Egress:
Stairways serving an occupant load of less than 50 are required to be at least thirty-six inches wide. Other stairs are generally required to be at least forty-four inches wide. The total occupant load will need to be multiplied by the code prescribed formula to determine the actual required egress width. Existing stairs are generally allowed to stay because they are historically significant to the building and technically infeasible to replace. Since the travel distance is over 75' on both floors, two exits are required (IBC Table 1006.2.1). The existing main stair is approximately forty-four inches wide. The south stair is much less than forty-four inches wide (dimensions vary because the wall steps in) and had steep risers with shallow treads. It is a benefit that the building already has two stairs and the south stair egresses directly to the exterior of the building. One thing to note is that if the basement is divided, two exits may still be required from various spaces. The first floor has two exits. In areas with multiple exits, the overall travel distance is allowed to be up to 200' in unsprinklered buildings (IBC Table 1017.2).

Plumbing Facilities:
If a commercial use occupies any part of the building at least one ADA compliant restroom will be required for each sex unless an exception can be used to have one unisex ADA compliant restroom (containing a toilet and lavatory). This is a requirement for each

commercial tenant space. The building is also required to have a service sink and provision for drinking water. Plumbing is still functional, but no fully compliant ADA restroom is present. For apartments, each dwelling unit is required to have a full bathroom (tub/shower, toilet, sink), a kitchen sink, and at least one washing machine connection for each 20 dwelling units.

Accessibility:
The first floor is required to have an accessible entry, path and restroom serving all commercial tenant spaces. The basement will need to comply with ADA requirements if the building has primary function spaces for the commercial tenants. If the building will have only apartments there are fewer ADA requirements. Historic buildings are not required to have Type B apartment units and Type A units are only required when there are more than 20 dwelling units. The building currently has no elevator. Code requires a stretcher-sized passenger elevator for accessibility to the basement if the public will be allowed in any space on that floor. The disproportionality rule can be used if the new elevator will be more than 20% of the construction cost. With the size of this project, it is the author's opinion that the disproportionality rule may allow the omission of an elevator. Depending on the project cost, and opinion of the code official, some other means of accommodation may be required such as a LULA (limited use, limited application) elevator connecting the first floor and basement. The building is currently listed as a local historic landmark, so there are additional benefits from the historic preservation exceptions of the building code and ADA not discussed here. The historic significance and possible benefits of being a historic building will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Performance Compliance Methods:
The International Existing Building Code has an option for existing buildings where prescriptive compliance of the code cannot be met to provide a series of calculations to demonstrate a level of safety equivalent to full code compliance. The performance method would possibly be a way to have non-compliant egress or incomplete fire rated systems, but the building would need to exceed the code in other areas to have a chance of passing. There are 21 areas where the building is evaluated and given a positive or negative score based on code compliance. There are three areas where points are totaled, Fire Safety (FS), Means of Egress (ME), General Safety (GS). Residential requires the following: FS ≥21, ME ≥38, and GS ≥38. The following is an example of the point system; not having fire sprinklers in an R-2 where they are required is a score of -6. Using this method can be beneficial, but it often requires spending extra money to upgrade parts of the building to avoid fire separations and/or sprinklers or other building components, so it isn't a "get out of sprinklers free" card. There are also positive and negative points for fire separation and having an elevator.

B. Zoning Analysis:

Designation:

This property is zoned R-1 –Single Family Residence District. The building is historically designated (2001), so the preservation commission will have to review proposed exterior changes for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA). There are some permitted uses in an R-1 District in addition to single family homes. These uses include, but are not limited to, schools, churches, libraries, family day cares, certain home occupations, and others. The maximum allowable building height above grade plane is thirty-five feet (35').

Setback:

The front yard setback is a minimum of twenty-five feet (25'). Side yards are required to be six feet, seven feet if a non-commercial building. The south yard for this property does not comply. The north side yard is a reversed corner lot which requires approximately a twelve-and-a-half-foot setback. A rear yard of twenty percent of the lot depth, but not more than thirty feet is required. The lot area must be at least 5,000 square feet since it was altered after 1938 but before 1966. This is a corner lot, so there is a vision clearance of twenty feet on each directions from the northwest corner of the property and ten feet in each direction from the northeast corner of the property (alley).

Other Requirements:

Off street parking is not required. If parking is provided is must comply with ADA requirements and each parking space must be at least eight feet – six inches wide by seventeen feet deep.

Parking spaces and aisles shall be clearly marked for lots having more than five vehicles.

Figure 47 – City of La Crosse Zoning Map (2026).

Chapter 04:
Engineering Analysis

A. STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS ANALYSIS:

By Marcus Zettler, RA

Overview:

This report was conducted using only visual observations to assess the condition of the building structure and to provide recommendations for correcting deficient and/or damaged portions of the building structure. This report is not meant to provide structural analysis for conditions created by the remodeling of the building nor is it a set of construction documents.

The 1940s brick and concrete library structure was found to be in fair to good condition, considering its age. The need for repairs is limited to the exterior brick envelope at select locations. Deficiencies in parts of the roof were recently corrected with repairs made to the flat roof portions of the building. A summary of the structure is detailed in the following section.

EXISTING CONDITIONS:

Foundations:

The foundations around the exterior of the building are constructed of load bearing cast-in-place concrete. The thickness could not be verified, but the walls appear to vary between 8”-12” thick not including plaster. There are a series of interior concrete bearing walls creating many small rooms. All basement walls appeared to be in fair-to-good condition. The north side of the building is not fully excavated. There is a rock ledge exposed in the basement as well as limestone foundations from what was probably the house that formerly occupied the site. The foundation walls in this part of the building may partially bear on the rock ledge.

Figure 48 – Concrete floor joist system, notice how the electrical conduit was drilled through the joist, not the clay tile (2026).

Figure 49 – Crawl space at the northwest corner of the basement (2026).

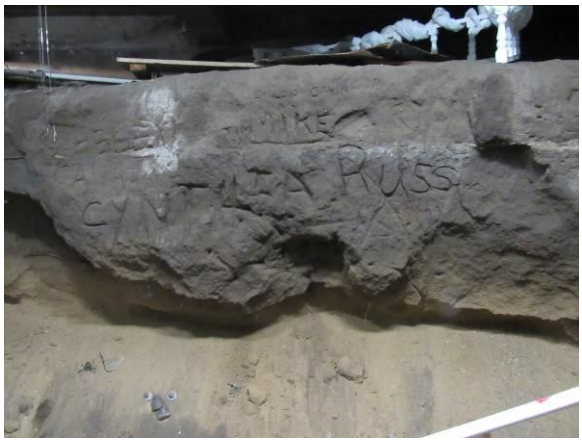

Figure 50 – Rock ledge at the north edge of the basement (2026).

The spring thaw was in progress at the time of this report. Most of the basement appeared to be dry. Only one small section of wall in the south stair had evidence of moisture.

Figure 51 – The stairs at the south end of the basement, notice the water (2026).

Exterior Walls:

The exterior walls above grade are multi-wythe brick and clay tile bearing walls. These walls are in fair condition in most locations with areas around grade showing signs of moisture saturation. The chimney on the south side of the building had some deterioration of the mortar joints which will require tuckpointing. The area around the window heads on the east and south sides of the building have some slight brick displacement. This may have been caused by the steel lintels rusting. The building appears to be completely constructed out of a reddish-brown brick blend, except for the limestone trimmings around various door and window openings. This brick is significantly harder than the old La Crosse orange brick. Due to the period of construction, a mortar with some Portland Cement was probably used. The inner and outer wythes of masonry are tied together with a row of headers every sixth course. This is a good detail and was also noted on the interior face of the walls in the attic.

Figure 52 – The biggest threat to the masonry is water infiltration (2026).

Attic/Roof:

The roof framing is composed of wood joists bearing on the exterior brick walls. This roof structure has two main framing systems. The gables have rafters and collar ties with cross bracing. This roof was well designed due to the weight of the slate roof. The roof drains to eaves around the perimeter of the building. Not having gutters is creating a water issue at grade. The flat roof areas were completely concealed and could not be verified. It was common to use wood framing for flat roof structures during this period. Maintenance stated that there was a small leak somewhere near the southwest corner of the building.

Floor Framing:

The basement is a concrete slab on grade and is in fair-to-good condition in most locations. There is a portion of the floor near the old house foundation on the north side that could be patched.

The first floor is composed of a concrete one-way joist system. This is a sturdy floor system, having 4" wide concrete joists with 12" hollow clay tile spacers. The floor also has a continuous concrete layer over the clay tiles. This is known as a topping slab. The portions of the floor that were visible looked to be in good condition. The south half of the library has finished ceilings, being a mix of plaster and wood-fiber tiles. The most important thing to note with this type of floor system, is that any cuts or penetrations need to be made through the clay tile areas of the floor, not the concrete ribs/joists. Most of the rebar will be in the joists and that gives the floor system its tensile strength. The total thickness and topping slab thickness could not be verified without invasive testing.

The structure is mostly good condition, but many areas were covered and could not be evaluated as mentioned above. If rust staining is encountered at any point, the rebar should be evaluated for deterioration.

There are two stairs, the center stair and the south stair. The center stairs are made of steel with concrete for the treads. This stair felt very solid and did not show signs of deterioration. The south stairs are very utilitarian and are constructed as cast-in-place concrete resting on grade. This stair is in fair condition; no deterioration was noticed for this stair either.

Figure 53 – The broken ridge slate and missing metal cap may be contributing to the roof leak (2026).

Figure 54 – The wood beams at the openings are decorative, the structure is above (2026).

Figure 55 – The faux beams at the ceiling are decorative, not structural (2026).

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Foundations:

The foundation walls need little to no work at this time. The damp area on the south wall may be corrected simply by adding gutters and downspouts directing water away from the foundation. The concrete slab needs no work. If the area on the north side of the building will be used for anything more than storage, the area next to the old house foundation could have a new slab added.

Exterior Walls:

The masonry on all exterior walls of the building needs a small amount of work. All deteriorated mortar joints should be re-pointed with appropriate mortar. As stated above, this brick is much harder than earlier local brick. For common bricks of this vintage, Type N mortar may be appropriate, but harder mortars such as Type 'S' should not be used. This building probably had mortar with some Portland cement used in the original construction. The original specifications are located at the public library archives and may have the original mortar mix called out. The largest area requiring masonry repairs is the chimney on the south wall of the library. The other area to monitor is the line at the window heads to the south and east sides of the building.

Attic/Roof:

The roof appears to have been well maintained, but there is apparently a small leak(s) at the southwest corner. This will need to be repaired. The roof appeared to be very well constructed. When it is time to replace the roof, a lift and relay should be done to preserve the slate. During this process any rotten or damaged wood framing members can be reinforced or replaced. The flat roof areas just had repairs done recently. The biggest thing to help the building will be adding gutters and downspouts around the entire building.

Figure 56 – The exterior masonry walls have an outside layer (wythe) of face brick and an inner layer(s) of hollow clay tile (2026).

Figure 57 – The attic is a mixture of walls, rafters and collar ties all constructed with dimensional lumber (2026).

Floor Framing:

The floor framing throughout this building has an above average load carrying capacity as compared to most buildings of this period. The concrete joist system using clay tile pans is a very reliable system, not to be confused with the inferior compression fit clay tile floor system. The spans are modest in most sections of the building, for example, the north section of the building has spans just under 14'. If new holes need to be cut for renovation, it is very important to avoid going through the concrete joists, holes should be drilled/cut through the clay tile areas. If a joist is cut, analysis and a correction by a structural engineer will be needed to support the surrounding floor areas. If intensive loads will be added to the floor, the capacity should be analyzed, but remember this floor supported heavy bookshelves for many decades.

Conclusion:

Overall, this building is in fair to good condition. If taken care of, it can last for many more decades, even centuries. The most pressing repair for the building is to add gutters and fix the minor roof leak(s) to protect the exterior masonry walls.

Figure 58 – Complex roof forms meet over the front entry with parallel gables and a cross gable, notice the cross bracing and collar ties (2026).

Figure 59 – Rafter ends were cut with a bird's mouth over the sill plates (2026).

Figure 60 – Sill plates have anchor bolts embedded in the masonry below (2026).

B. MECHANICAL SYSTEMS ANALYSIS:

By Christopher Olson, P.E.

EXISTING SYSTEMS:

Central Plant Equipment:

All of the major mechanical components have been replaced within recent years and appear to be in very good condition. The mechanical rooms are in exceptional condition and routine maintenance looks to be a high priority for this facility.

The original heating system was some type of furnace with under-floor ductwork radiating from the basement mechanical room to a combination of floor registers and wall registers located uniformly throughout the building. The furnace has now been replaced with a modern air handling unit which can supply both heat and mechanical cooling (air conditioning) to the building using the same underfloor ductwork.

Figure 61 – New Air Handling Unit in Basement (2026).

An air handling unit, although complex in appearance, is mostly a fan housed in a box with "coils" that provide either heat via hot water or cooling via cold refrigerant, along with automation devices and a means to mix in some outdoor ventilation air.

Heat is supplied from a new, modular, high-efficiency boiler plant comprised of (2) nominal 300,000 BTU/Hr. boilers. The boilers would appear to be the same age as the air handling unit. The boiler design is a traditional "primary-secondary" concept allowing for complete independent operation of a single boiler, if needed, while operating at peak efficiency.

Figure 62 – New Hot Water Boiler Plant in Basement (2026).

Boiler venting is accomplished with PVC plastic pipes for both exhaust of flue gases as well as introduction of combustion air. While often tempting to re-use original chimneys and combustion air ductwork, this means of venting new boilers is preferred for the operation of the boilers as well as optimum overall energy efficiency.

The final component of the new central heating/cooling plant is the air conditioning unit. This unit sits outside on the ground and technically is a "compressor-condensing unit". It uses a refrigerant circuit to extract heat from

the building and reject this heat outdoors. It is a very common installation.

The air handling unit is ***Trane***-brand unit, but the compressor-condensing unit appears to be newer and is a ***Johnson Controls***-brand unit. Presumably the Johnson Controls unit replaced a similar unit that likely was Trane brand and installed at the same time as the air handling unit.

Figure 63 – New Air Conditioning Unit installed on Grade outside Building Entrance (2026).

The compressor-condensing unit is connected to the air handling unit via refrigerant piping. The refrigerant piping installation looks to be done correctly and very nicely. The cooling coil is located "first" in the air handling unit with the heating coil second. This means that return air coming back from the building is cooled first and then can be re-heated if needed. This is not a normal mode of operation, but it does allow for dehumidification of the building if needed. This is a minor detail, but can be very important on these older building to manage indoor moisture levels.

It should be noted that the compressor-condensing unit, although quite new, uses R-410A as a refrigerant. As of this year, R-410A is being phased out of production for environmental reasons. It will have no impact on the use of the unit for its likely life expectancy, but should the unit fail prematurely, or when it does require replacement, the entire refrigeration system might need to be modified or replaced to work with new refrigerants. This should not be construed as a negative point. R-410A has been the refrigerant of choice for nearly 30 years. Refrigerant for routine maintenance will be available for many years.

The heating-cooling plant at this facility is not controlled by a simple room thermostat. A true "energy management" system is installed to control the operation of the various components. The control system here is an ***American Auto-Matrix*** brand system. **Winona Controls, Inc**. out of Caledonia, MN is the local representative for American Auto-Matrix. While the system should operate on its own, any potential new buyer or user of the facility will want to maintain a relationship with **Winona Control, Inc.** to help with control of these components and to stay up to date on software upgrades.

Figure 64 – Energy Management System installed at this Facility (2026).

Ventilation:

The air handling unit does appear to have outside air ventilation capabilities. The exact source of that outside air intake and duct routing was not discovered in its entirety, but appears to be Code compliant and more than adequate for any foreseeable use of this building.

The public toilet rooms within the building are equipped with modern exhaust fans within each room that appear to be ducted to the exterior of the building. This would seem to be a Code-compliant installation.

During our site visit, indoor air quality appeared to be very good. No odors or excessive moisture were observed.

Air Distribution:

This system operates as a single zone heating and cooling system. The air handling unit produces a single discharge air temperature (hot, cool, or simple recirculation) and blows this air throughout the entire facility thorugh the original ductwork distribution system.

Since the facility is not large and the majority of the facility is open, this would seem to be more than adequate. During our field visit, the space temperatures seemed to be uniform throughout the building. No objection noise or air motion was observed. Ductwork in these older buildings, traditionally, was larger that what is currently used. This generally results in low noise levels and comfortable conditions.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

We really have no recommendations for improvements, corrective work, or energy efficiency improvement options.

The primary HVAC equipment is relatively new, comprised of good components, energy-efficient in practice, and clearly well-maintained. The system operation is generally quite simple.

The existing energy management system will be extremely useful to help monitor energy consumption and system operation. Any new use of the building will want to tune the ventilation requirements, temperature requirements, and hours of operation/use to the actual needs of the facility.

C. ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS ANALYSIS:

By Christopher Olson, P.E.

EXISTING SYSTEMS:

Electrical Service and Distribution:

The electrical service and entire main distribution system has been replaced in recent years. The service entrance panelboard and majority of the distribution equipment is located in a closet in the Basement level.

Figure 65 – New Electrical Service and Distribution Equipment (2026).

The electrical service is a 240/120 VAC, three phase, four wire "Delta" service with a "B High Leg". This is an older service configuration typical used for smaller building that have just a few three phase loads and mostly need single phase power. In the case of this building, the air conditioning unit requires three phase power, as well as the air handling unit primary fan motor.

The new distribution equipment is ***Square D*** brand – Type "NQOD". This is generally considered the premier electrical distribution equipment. The installation is well done and well labeled and would appear to be fully Code compliant.

It is believed that these new panelboards replaced old distribution equipment in the same location and that existing branch circuits were likely re-used and re-connected to these new panelboards. Flexible conduit is visible at these new panelboards and electrical devices observed in the Library are clearly not new.

Electric Devices:

Electrical devices located in the Library are a mix of new and old. During some remodeling, a row of computer workstations was installed. The wiring at these locations is part of modular furniture and clearly is modern and relatively new.

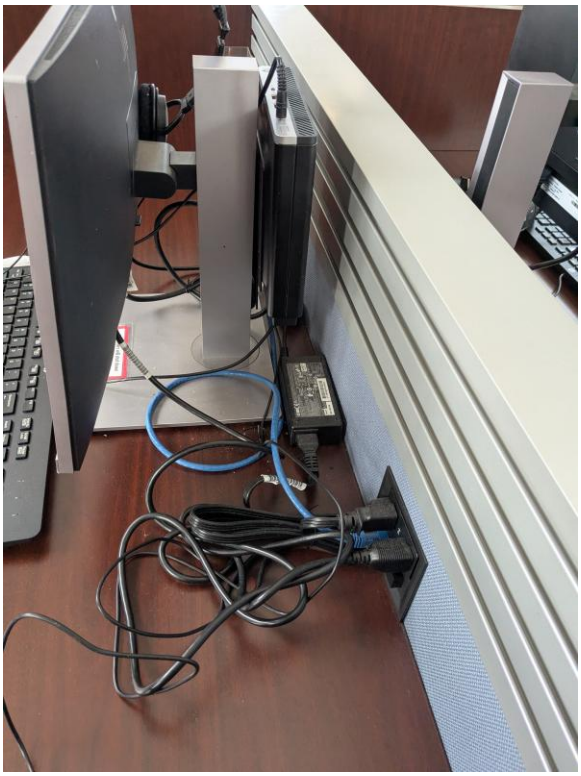

Figure 66 – New Electrical Devices in Modular Furniture (2026).

It appears that the Check-out Desk may have been remodeled in that same time period and electrical devices in that area look to be relatively new.

In other locations, wall-mounted electrical devices (receptacles) are clearly of an older era, but all observed were “3 wire” with ground and appeared to be in good working order. The device would be considered Code compliant, however, the age of the wiring is unknown.

There are numerous floor-mounted receptacles throughout the main level of the Library. None of these were observed with a cover plate. Some did have Code-compliant receptacle with a ground pin. Others were older 2-wire receptacles without any ground.

Figure 67 – Old Floor-mounted Electrical Receptacle (2026).

It is not known if these floor receptacles are still active and energized or not, but we would discourage continued use of these devices. We suspect that they may not be energized since they were note noted in the Panelboard directories.

Lighting switches observed were mostly manual switches and appeared to be of an older age, but functional and in good working order.

Lighting:

Lighting has generally been updated in recent years, but all appeared to be fluorescent light source. Light levels were very good and all lighting fixtures appeared to be in good working order.

The main rooms of the Library are fitted with modern "linear" lighting with both an uplight and a downlight component. This was a good choice using the vaulted, white-painted ceilings at large reflectors to illuminate the space.

Figure 68 – Lighting in the Main Level of the Library (2026).

This same lighting fixture and concept was used throughout the main level of the Library with high ceilings.

In rooms with lower ceilings, the lighting is a combination of decorative and utilitarian. The rooms with decorative lighting are under-lit by modern standards. The rooms with utilitarian lighting provide good lighting levels.

Figure 69 – Lighting in the north reading room of the Library (2026).

Figure 70 – Lighting in Other Areas of the Main Level of the Library (2026).

There are opportunities for lighting improvements, but in general, the lighting is adequate, functional and in physically good condition.

Life Safety Lighting:

The building does appear to have an adequate quantity of EXIT lights. The majority of the EXIT lights are a modern design which presumably include the Code-mandated battery backup. At least one observed EXIT light was antiquated without any emergency power supply.

Figure 71 – Antiquated EXIT Light on the Main Level of the Library (2026).

"Stand-alone" emergency egress lighting was not visible. It is possible that some of the general lighting includes integral emergency egress lighting as this would have been an option for the installed lighting fixtures. Depending on the future use of the facility, emergency egress lighting, as required by current Building Code, should be provided, or verified.

Communications Wiring:

Currently the building has an extensive array of modern communications wiring, although the City of La Crosse intends to remove all of the electronics when they vacate the building. The building wiring (mostly Category 5 or better) will remain for reuse.

Century Link currently provides service to the building and appears to have a fiber service directly into the building.

Figure 72 – Communications Equipment in the Lower Level of the Library (2026).

The data jacks on the main level of the building are mostly at the computer workstations and the check-out desk. The perimeter walls are generally covered with bookshelves with minimal provisions for either electrical power or communications outlets.

Fire Alarm:

There is no central fire alarm system currently installed in this building, but there are a number of individual, line voltage smoke detectors installed in key locations.

Security Systems:

There currently is an extensive security system installed in the building, although the City of La Crosse is presumably removing most of the equipment.

The main portions of the Library are fitted with wall-mounted cameras. Motion detectors are assumed to be present, but not documented. ***PerMar*** is the current system vendor.

Figure 73 – Security System Keypad at Main Library Entrance (2026).

Recommendations:

Much like the HVAC systems, the Library has been well maintained and equipment has been updated in recent years. The electrical distribution is in excellent condition and suitable for decades of future use.

Depending on the future use of the building, certain improvements could be made in the lighting systems, but the current installation is suitable for many more years of use. Conversion to LED lighting would result in some energy savings.

Life safety lighting and emergency egress lighting may be deficient, depending on the future use of the building. At a minimum, the exact extent of emergency egress lighting must be documented and evaluated. The style of modern EXIT light currently installed in this building generally has a 10-15 year life for the battery backup. This time may have expired for the installed EXIT lights. Replacement of all EXIT lights should be considered.

A fire alarm system may be required depending on the future use of the building, although the building is relatively small and Code will only require a true fire alarm system for limited occupancies and uses.

D. PLUMBING SYSTEMS ANALYSIS:

By Christopher Olson, P.E.

EXISTING CONDITIONS:

Water Service and Distribution:

Plumbing systems in this building are minimal, serving three (3) small toilet rooms and a single break room sink.

Water supply comes from the La Crosse municipal system and enters the building through the Basement level floor. The water supply pipe appears to be original to the building construction. The main control valve is an old gate valve and there is a water quality sampling valve installed upstream of the meter, which is not done anymore.

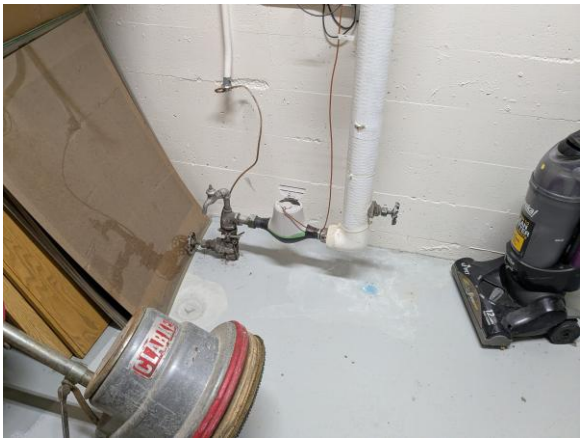

Figure 74 – Domestic Water Service Entrance and Water Meter (2026).

The water meter is 1" size, which is probably too large for the actual plumbing fixtures within the building, but might be needed for the lawn irrigation system.

All of the water supply piping in the vicinity of the water service entrance is older galvanized steel piping and all valves are generally old gate valves. Despite the age, there is no evidence of any current leakage, or any past leakage.

It is believed that the majority of the water distribution piping within the building is old galvanized steel, although there are sections of new copper piping around the new water and probably around the public toilet rooms.

Water Heater:

The single water heater is a new electric heater of 50 gallon capacity with standard 4,500 watt heating elements. The water heater is electrically fed through a timeclock so it can be disabled during portions of the day.

Figure 75 – Domestic Water Heater (2026).

There is no hot water circulation system within this building.

Sanitary Waste and Vent Piping:

Very little of the sanitary drainage piping is visible within the building, but the piping is generally assumed to be original to the building construction. The sanitary sewer drains to the La Crosse municipal sanitary sewer system, but exact location of the building sewer is not known. There are municipal water mains and sanitary sewer mains on both Gillette Street and Kane Street.

No issues were reported regarding drainage problems, Basement Level flooding or similar issues. No evidence of previous problems were observed.

Plumbing Fixtures:

There are (3) toilet rooms on the Main Level of the Library. Two are public toilet rooms and have been renovated in recent years. The third is more dated and located in staff only areas of the Library.

All three toilet rooms contain a single water closet (toilet) and a single lavatory (sink). Water closets are “residential” floor-mounted, tank flush units in all locations. The lavatories are all wall-hung with manual faucets. The renovated public toilet rooms were clearly remodeled to meet handicapped requirements at the time, with grab bars for the water closets and long lever handles (wrist blades) on the lavatories.

Figure 76 – Main Level Public Toilet Room (2026).

Figure 77 – Staff Area Toilet Room (2026).

All of these toilet room fixtures appear to be in satisfactory condition and fully functional. No issues were observed.

There is also a Janitor Closet with service sink on the Main Level of the Library in close proximity to the public toilet rooms. A traditional service sink is located in this room. The sink is showing its age, but appears to be in satisfactory condition considering it likely age. The sink is clearly used on a regular basis.

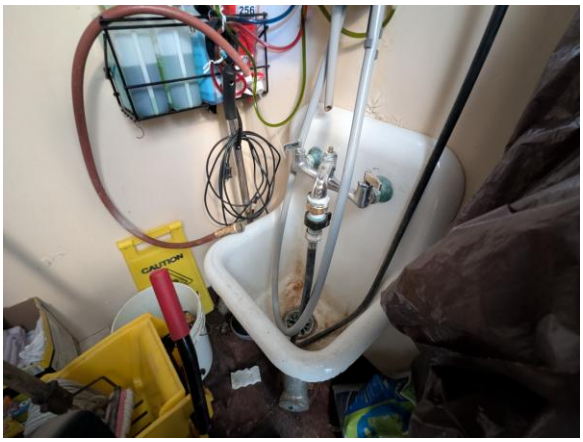

Figure 78 – Janitor Closet Service Sink (2026).

The last plumbing fixture on the Main Level of the Library is a single sink in the staff room as part of a ***Murphy-Cabranette*** compact kitchen unit.

Figure 79 – Break Room Compact Kitchen Unit (2026).

This compact kitchen unit appears to be in very good condition. These units were last manufactured in the early-to-mid 1950's, making this unit approximately 75 years old, if not considerably older. The faucet on the sink appears to be original and most of the knobs and handles are intact.

Recommendations:

Plumbing improvements probably want to occur with building renovations. Everything seems to be functional and in good working order. Normally we would recommend replacing old valves with new valves to ensure they will actually work when needed. That would be recommended here as well, but replacement of these old valves might result in pipe damage and a greater project than intended.

Chapter 05:
Historic Impact Study

A. Property Description:

Property Overview:

Current Name: North Community Library
Historic Name: North Side Branch Library
Address: 1552 Kane Street, La Crosse, WI
Historic Status: Locally Designated 2001

Building Description:

The current North Community Library was completed and opened to the public on August 31, 1942.[1] The origins of the north branch library began in 1904 with a portion of Brakke's Drug Store being used to house books. The location was 1353 Caledonia Street.[2] Today an accountant's office occupies the space.

Very little has changed since the building opened in 1942. It has been very well maintained. The building was designed in the English Tudor Revival Style. This style was heavily influenced by English cottages and has a low massing, brick walls with warm color tones, the impression of half-timber framing infilled with stucco, and a slate roof. The building blends into the residential neighborhood very well.

The front of the building is the west façade and faces Kane Street. The building has a large gable facing west near the corner of Gillette and Kane Streets. This gable has a large triple window on first floor surrounded by limestone masonry. Above the window is a cantilevered projection that has wood trim applied with stucco panels between to mimic the half-timbered buildings in England. It also gives the impression of a second story even though the library is only one story above grade. There is another parallel gable just south of the main gable. This section has an offset entry with a deeply recessed pair of entry doors. Next to the doors is a niche with the name of the library carved in limestone. The Tudor style was very informal on the architectural spectrum, the goal was to have balance in the façade, not symmetry. This added a tension and visual interest to the design, even a sense of whimsey. Above the entry door was an oriel window centered on the gable to focus the eye as it scans the building. The parallel gables create a water trap that was dealt with by a large sloping roof between the two sections. This minimized the valley space between them. The large wing of the library to the south of the entry has three triple windows evenly spaced in a sequence. These windows have high sills to allow for bookshelves below. The façade terminates at the south end with a small gable projecting from the main building mass. It is simpler than the main gable, but borrows some of the detailing. There is a triple window centered in the projection with a limestone surround. This projection serves as a nook for reading on the interior.

The north façade is much simpler, having the main mass with the gable roof making up about four-fifths of the facade. There is a lower section with no windows recessed back from the main façade at the back of the building. The main part of the façade has five irregularly spaced window openings with high sills. This allows for bookshelves to be installed below the windows. The rest of the façade has very little detailing, brick walls and a slate roof above. There are no dormers or cross gables on this side of the building. Other than the windows, it does not appear that anything has changed on this façade.

The east façade is very utilitarian. It has three main sections. There is a low, flat roofed projection centered on the north gable. This portion of the building has brick matching the rest of the library with a simplified brick dentil course just above the window head level. There is a single punched opening with a pair of windows centered on the gable. The rest of the

[1] La Crosse Tribune 30 Aug. 1942. P9
[2] La Crosse Tribune 7 Dec. 1972. P11

east façade has the same low, flat roofed massing with the dentil course running all the way to the south end of the building. There are three narrow punched openings next to the north section of the building, each has a single window. Next is a pair of doors opening to the main floor of the library. There is a small flight of concrete stairs on the exterior rising to the door opening. Immediately south of the doors is another series of three small window openings, then a larger window opening with a pair of windows and another door on the south end of the composition. This door opening is well below the first floor, opening directly onto a stair to the basement. This door has eight panels, the top two are glazed while the rest are solid. There are two large window wells on either side of the center entry door. They are formed out of cast concrete and hold the earth back, allowing for window openings into the basement meeting rooms. These concrete walls have metal railings to provide some fall protection. The third part of the east façade is mostly hidden from view by the lower part of the building. There are dormers providing daylight into the main library space. These dormers are finished with a copper roof and minimally project above the eaves of the main roof line. The large gable on the north does not have any windows, only a small vent framed with limestone.

The south façade is only a few feet from the property line. It has a very eclectic composition. Main gable terminates at a large double-flue chimney. There is an offset gable to the east with a large opening containing three windows. This opening has a full limestone surround. To the west of the chimney is a projection that contains the small gable facing west. There are no openings on the south face of this projection. A peculiar bump on the building is in the joint where the chimney meets the main wall. There is a small bump out with its own small slate roof. The east half of the south façade is the low flat roofed portion of the building. It has the dentil course at the window head level and three punched openings. The one next to the chimney is higher and contains a pair of windows. This opens into the main library space. The next is a very small window opening into the restroom, and the third is a narrow punched opening, similar to those on the east side of the building.

The historic windows have been replaced with modern window units that simulate the divided lites of the original windows. The original windows had steel frames with leaded glass. These windows were designed to look like the old small panes of glass found on many English (Tudor) buildings. The existing windows are not terrible, but there are better options that can more closely approximate the historic character of the original design intent.

The main parti of the library is a “T” shape. There is an entry projection next to the arm of the “T”. This creates space for the vestibule and book drop. The vestibule opens into the center of the building with the librarian’s desk opposite the entry doors. The main library spans the leg of the “T” to the south and the crossing to the north. This space has numerous window openings high on the walls above the book shelves. The end of the “T” in the northeast corner of the building has a low ceiling with more book shelves. The base of the “T” on the south end of the library has a reading nook with a fireplace. The low flat roof portion of the building at the southeast part of the building squares off the “T” shape with a submissive massing to the main structure. This part of the building has more of the private/staff spaces. There is a hall containing the main stair to the basement that also contains the back entry. Off of this back hall are two restrooms and some storage space. There is also a workroom for staff, more storage spaces, a staff lounge area with a kitchenette and another, more private restroom.

The finishes in the library are a mixture of modern and historic. The entry vestibule has historic trim and plaster with modern ceramic tile floors and vinyl wall base. The main library spaces have modern carpet and ceramic tile, newer computer carols, circulation desk and furniture. The walls and ceiling still have historic plaster, wood trim, built-in wood book cases and wonderful built-in benches. The fireplace is also original, even though the stone has been painted. It is important to mention that the historic wood trim and furnishings still have the original transparent (stained) finish. The paint colors may have changed on the walls and ceilings over the years, but the plaster remains in relatively good condition. The ceilings are vaulted, following a lower slope than the main roofline. The plaster-clad beams at the ceiling still have faux painting making them look like wood. The light fixtures and ceiling fans are modern as is the mechanical equipment, but the ductwork and diffusers appear to have changed little since the 1940s.

The basement is very utilitarian. The main stair leads down to a small landing with three doors. To the left (south) is a larger meeting room with windows high on the wall and a built-in bench. The floor has modern carpet, the walls are plaster with a picture rail and the ceiling is wood-fiber tiles. On the far side of the room is another door opening onto a landing for the second stair leading directly to the exterior. Another smaller meeting room is directly to the right of the main stair landing, it has high windows and a picture rail, plaster walls and ceiling and carpet flooring. The first of a series of storage and mechanical rooms are directly in front of the main stair landing. These rooms have painted concrete floors, walls and ceilings. Mechanical, electrical and plumbing equipment and a small maintenance office are located in these spaces. The north part of the building is the least finished. The ceiling is unfinished, exposed structure, floors and walls are unpainted concrete. Parts of the building are unexcavated crawl spaces with dirt floor. Portions of a limestone foundation from a former house have been incorporated into the rooms. Very little has changed in the finishes of the basement. The biggest change has been the upgrade of building systems.

Overall, the building retains a large amount of historic integrity. The building has been well cared for over the years. The biggest change impacting the historic building fabric has been the installation of new windows roughly twenty years ago. It should be noted that historic paint colors could be determined by paint analysis and historic floor finishes may remain under the current flooring.

B. Historical Analysis:

Building History:

The North Community Library at 1552 Kane Street in La Crosse opened on the last day of August 1942. It was a long road, almost a decade, from the first push for a new library to the manifestation of this building. In the summer of 1933, the request was made for two new library buildings, a north and south branch.[3] A letter to the Board of Education of the City of La Crosse from the Board of Trustees of the La Crosse Public Library outlined the request for two new library buildings in July 1933.[4] The letter was very direct, it stated that the north branch library was in a storefront with two rooms and the only ventilation were the transoms at the front and back doors. The only daylight came from the storefront. The building was extremely crowded and did not function well. Bookshelves were limited and overfull making it difficult to find room for new books. The circulation of the north branch library was between 85,000 and 90,000 items annually.[5] The Board recommended against making the north branch library part of Logan High School stating that it would need a different construction, needed more space than what the school was willing to spare, would require a different heating system due to different hours of operation, and would require separate access to keep the school separate and allow the school to be closed and secured while the library was open to the public.[6] Another letter was submitted to the Mayor and Common Council stating that the Library Board passed a resolution on July 3, 1933. This letter requested that the city add two branch library buildings to their request to the Federal Government. Each library would receive $40,000 in funding.[7] This was part of a Public Works Administration (PWA) request.

It seems that the Logan High School location was still being considered as the process progressed. In February 1934 a Tribune article stated that architects were asked to submit concepts in a design competition.[8] Years passed and the branch library projects had little movement. Additional pressure was added by library staff. Librarian Lilly Borresen led a tour of the overcrowding and unhealthy conditions. Ventilation was very poor creating the conditions for spreading infectious diseases. There were only six single-bulb light fixtures in the entire main reading room at the north branch library. The north branch had two rooms, each was heated by a small stove, no furnace. The floor was failing throughout. The hardwood was splintering and linoleum was peeling up.[9] Later in 1937, a Tribune article stated that another request for a new north and south branch library was made and this was the fourth request to the City since the movement began in 1933. This article states that architect, Otto Merman, prepared sketches for the new north branch library in April 1934.[10] By the fall of 1937, the library board pushed forward with getting plans and estimates for the new libraries and a search for appropriate sites began.[11] The delay in deciding on the libraries caused the City of La Crosse to have an additional application to the PWA for funding. The earlier application was mostly for school improvements including Logan High School. Since the library was not part of the original

[3] "La Crosse Library Makes Request for Two New Buildings." La Crosse Tribune. 27 July 1933. P9.
[4] Letter to the Board of Education of the City of La Crosse. July 1933. P1.
[5] Ibid. P1.
[6] Ibid. P2.
[7] Letter to the Mayor and Common Council of the City of La Crosse. P1.
[8] "Proposes New North Side Public Library." La Crosse Tribune. 10 February 1934.
[9] "La Crosse Branch Libraries Inadequate Says Librarian." La Crosse Tribune. 21 March 1937. P5.
[10] "Need of Modern, Adequate Branch Libraries Stressed." La Crosse Tribune. 25 March 1937. P9.
[11] "Branch Library Plans Ordered." La Crosse Tribune. 9 Sept. 1937. P1.

submittal, it would have delayed the school application if the library were added to the program of the school. This helped to resolve the disagreement amongst the Council to have the library be part of the Logan School site or be a free standing building on a different north side location. The discussions led to a bond question in 1938 for four projects, the branch libraries, Fire Station No. 4, an addition to the Vocational School (Coleman Center) and a public school project.[12] The PWA application was approved then rescinded due to a rule about the schedule of a referendum not being followed.[13] The referendum passed by a margin of 7,177 to 5,230 in a November 1938 election, but the referendum was held too late for the PWA requirements.[14] The lack of federal funds delayed the project. 1938 was near the end of the PWA grant programs and Congress was starting to wind down funding for the program.

The project was released to bid after the referendum passed. Otto Merman, the architect who designed the original concept passed away in 1935 and his successor firm Nelson & Fuchs completed the design and issued it for bidding. Bids were due at 2:00 PM on November 17, 1938.[15] Theodore J Molzahn and Sons, Inc. was the lowest bid for general construction coming in at $41,443. Arthur Schwalbe came in a close second at $42,106. The low bid on library equipment was submitted by Newton and Hold Furniture Co. Chicago with a price of $1,649.57. The local firm Segelke and Kohlhaus came in second at $2,240.[16] The PWA funds were never realized and the program ended. The library project failed and the movement had to regroup. On April 1, 1941, the project again had a referendum.[17] By July, Council approved to secure the Kane and Gillette Street site for $5,000 over the Avon and Sill Street site. The motion passed 11 to 10.[18]

The new bids were reported in the October 2, 1941 La Crosse Tribune. This time Arthur Schwalbe prevailed with a low bid of $46,950 beating out Peter Nelson and Son by $50! The architects noted that bids were about 10% higher than the bids three years prior. There were four alternates to lower costs, substitute the concrete floor structure with wood, substitute the steel windows with wood windows, substitute cork flooring with linoleum, and to substitute the slate roof with asphalt shingles. Luckily it looks like most, if not all of the alternates were not accepted. Newton and Hoyt of Chicago were the low bid of $1,927.45 for the library equipment.[19] The building had its soft opening on August 31, 1942. No grand opening was held due to the landscaping not being complete.[20]

After the library's completion, it faithfully served La Crosse for its intended purpose and continues to do so at the time of this report. There is a locally significant individual associated with this building, librarian Anna Pederson. Anna joined the La Crose Public Library staff in 1907. She began working at the north branch library in 1911. The branch library was in its original location at 1353 Caledonia Street. She was with the branch library through the move and served as the librarian until her retirement in 1972 at the age of 87. The Tribune article stated that "Miss Pederson has

[12] "Send Application for City Library Project to PWA." La Crosse Tribune. 6 Aug. 1938. P5.
[13] "Branch Library Project Held Up on Technicality." La Crosse Tribune. 23 Nov. 1938. P1.
[14] "Library Bond Issue Receives Approval." La Crosse Tribune. 9 Nov. 1938.
[15] "La Crosse Branch Public Library P.W.A. 1718F." Specifications by Nelson & Fuchs November 1938.
[16] "Molzahn Firm Enters Lowest Bid on Library." La Crosse Tribune. 18 Nov. 1938.
[17] « Our Own Referendum. » 31 March 1941. P6.
[18] "Council Votes Funds to Buy Briebach Site." La Crosse Tribune. 12 July 1941. P1.
[19] "Proposed North Side Branch Library." 2 Oct. 1941. P2.
[20] "Informal Opening of North Side Library Planned Monday; No Ceremonies Contemplated Pending Project's Completion." La Crosse Tribune. 30 Aug. 1942. P9.

devoted most of the twentieth century to the adults and children of the North Side in her effort of "getting books and people together"."[21] Many north side residents referred to the library as "Pederson's Library." She had a profound impact on the youth in north La Crosse. Programs at the library included a film program, story hour, and summer reading programs. At the time of her retirement she had worked under four of the five administrative librarians since the founding of the La Crosse Public Library.[22] She taught a short class at Logan High School every year about understanding the library. She also spoke to public and private elementary school classes about the library and summer reading programs.[23] She had a Christmas Tree every year that had ornaments from around the world. One of her main missions was to get young people interested in reading and learning. Ms. Pederson made the first library shut-in call to a young North Side girl with a broken leg.[24] A photo of Ms. Pederson adorns the main reading room at the library. Ms. Pederson and "her" library made a profound impact to thousands of people on the north side of La Crosse.

The building has endured through the years and is an icon to the community. The quality of design and construction has allowed the building to age gracefully. Over the past 10-15 years there have been numerous discussions about continuing to have a north side library. This report is a result of these discussions and the growing momentum to consolidate services. The internet has changed the way in which people have access to information. With the library era possibly coming to an end for this building it has many viable options for a new use.

[21] "Librarian has Served North Siders Since 1911." La Crosse Tribune. 7 Dec. 1972. P11.
[22] Ibid. P11.
[23] Ibid. P11.
[24] Ibid. P11.

Significance of Property:

The building is not currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This building could be individually listed under Criteria 'A' – Historical Events, and/or Criteria 'C' – Architecture. The building has been used as a public library for its entire existence. A large amount of historic building fabric remains. The small upgrades that have happened over the years have not created a significant change to the historic interpretation of the spaces. The reading and stacks areas are still largely unchanged and the condition of the original book shelves, benches and other built-ins are excellent. Otto Merman was a leading architect in La Crosse until his untimely death in 1935. His successors faithfully carried out the design with modifications as needed to provide a cutting edge library design for La Crosse. The masonry has had little to no insensitive modifications over the years and the original slate roof is still protecting the building from the elements. The massing and hand crafted exterior details allow the building to blend into the residential neighborhood. The biggest change to the exterior of the building is the removal of the original windows, but the new windows did not alter the size of the masonry openings. The floor plan has remained largely unchanged since the building's completion. With current research, it is the author's opinion that, due to the considerable amount of historic building fabric remaining and how this building was and is a landmark to the north side community, there is a good chance that this building could be listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places. In its current status the building is not eligible for state or federal historic tax credits, but being listed individually or as part of a National Register Historic District would make the property eligible to apply for historic tax credits.

The building on this property was an investment in La Crosse's future. It took almost a full decade of pushing to get the library funded and constructed. There was a dedicated group of citizens who knew the importance of an education, not just for children, but also for adults. The building has a lot of life left and can continue to serve the community in a new role after the library era ends. This building is a north side landmark. The significance of this property is as a stand-alone building nestled into the heart of the north side. This project was part of the grand vision to have quality learning facilities open to all, not just in the middle of La Crosse, but also to the north and south sides of the city.

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La Crosse Tribune Newspaper, Various Dates:
July 27, 1933
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March 21, 1937
March 25, 1937
March 28, 1937
March 29, 1937
September 9, 1937
May 17, 1938
August 6, 1938
November 9, 1938
November 18, 1938
November 23, 1938
January 11, 1939
March 31, 1941
July 7, 1941
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December 7, 1972

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Nelson & Fuchs, Architects. Specifications for the "La Crosse Branch Public Library – P.W.A. 1718F. November 1938.

Steele, Fred E. City Attorney. Letter to the Board of Trustees, La Crosse Public Library. 2 Feb. 1940.

Steenwyk, G. Van. Letter to W. P. Roellig, Allis Chalmers Mfg. Co. 1 Nov. 1938.

Wisconsin Historical Society Architecture and History Inventory, record #34574.

All historic photos are located at UW-La Crosse Murphy Library Special Collections and the La Crosse Public Library Archives. Historic drawings are located at the La Crosse Public Library Archives.

Historic Status:

The North Community Library is located one block west of George Street, a major north-south traffic artery. Gillette Street is a secondary thoroughfare, running on the northern boundary of the site. Its location was in the center of La Crosse's north side. With its prominence in the community and largely intact historic layout and materials, it is the author's opinion that this building would be a strong candidate for being listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places in its current condition. The library is already listed as a local historic landmark (designated 2001). This means that the building is not currently eligible to utilize state or federal historic tax credits, but must be reviewed by the Heritage Preservation Commission for any exterior alterations.

Should the building be successfully nominated to the National Register, the building would be required to be "income producing" in order to utilize historic tax credits, so non-profit owners, condominiums and owner-occupied dwelling units would not be eligible uses. At the time of this report, State and Federal Historic Tax Credits can each be claimed for 20% of

"Qualified Rehabilitation Expenses", QRE. This means that up to 40% of a rehabilitation project can qualify. If the building is converted to a single-family home, it could potentially qualify for the owner-occupied historic home state tax credit that is currently set at 25% of the QRE. It should be noted that this program has significantly more exclusions for QRE than the tax credits for income producing properties and there are currently no federal historic tax credits for owner-occupied homes.

It is the author's opinion that this building may qualify under two of the four criteria evaluated for National Register eligibility. Criteria 'A' – Events could be sought due to the building's long history as a library. Criteria 'C' – Architecture may be better to apply since so much of the original building remains.

A period of significance for this building would be the entire library era. The building has changed so little over the years and it is still used for its original purpose, a testament to the excellent design.

C. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps:

1552 Kane Street
La Crosse, WI

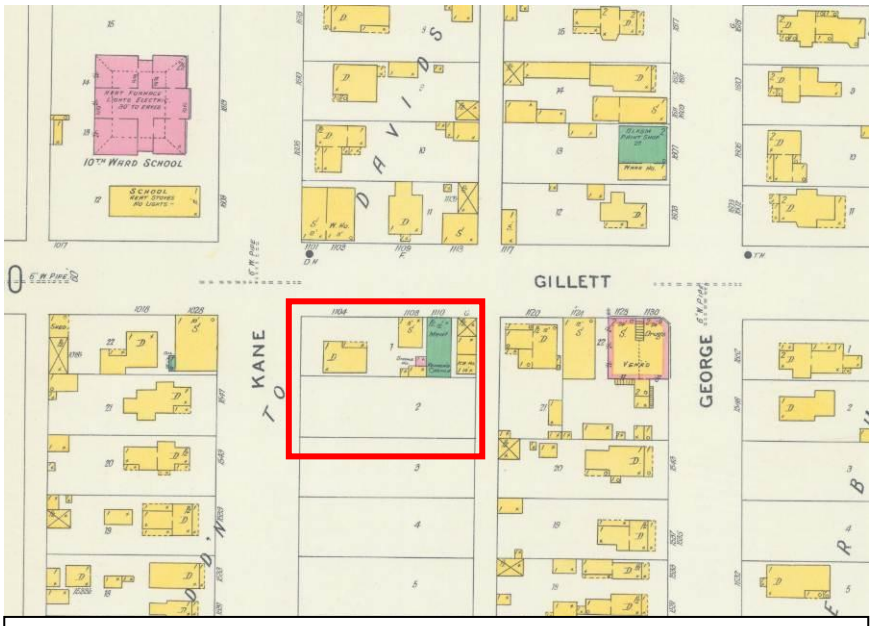


Figure 80 – 1906 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, City of La Crosse, WI. (House that was removed is shown on the site)

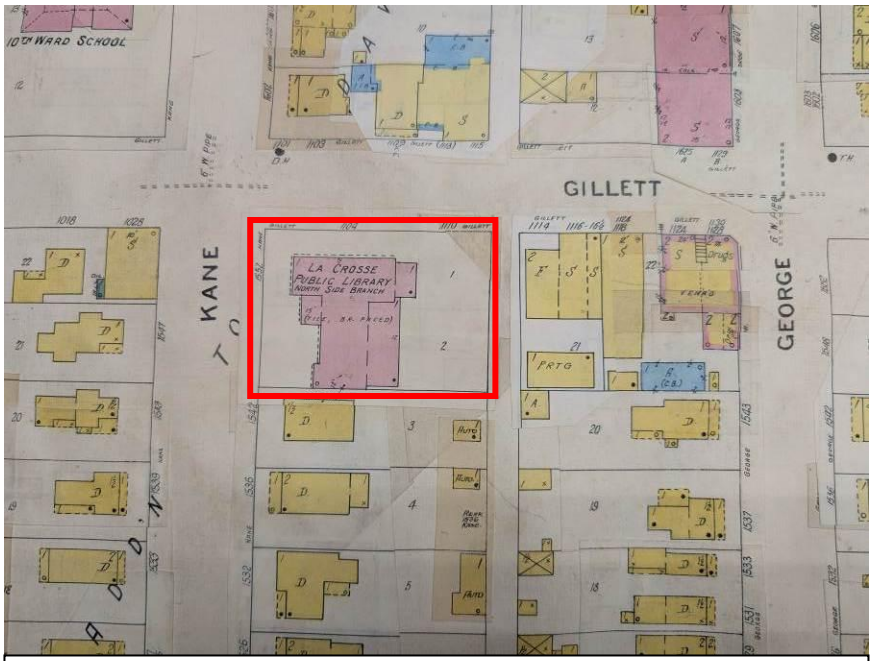
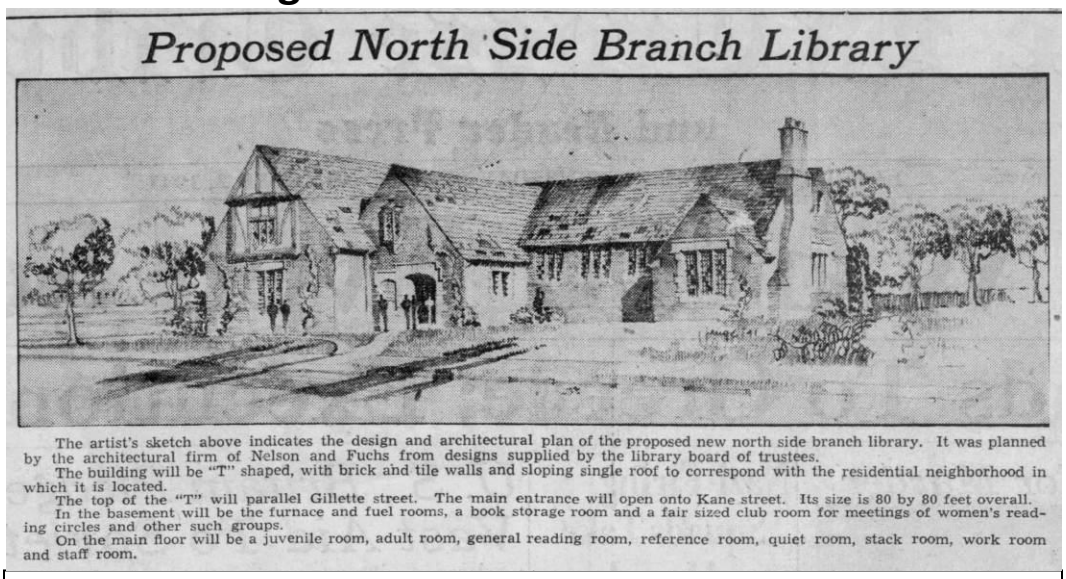


Figure 81 – 1954 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, City of La Crosse, WI. (Library is shown)

D. Historic Building Photos:



Proposed North Side Branch Library

The artist's sketch above indicates the design and architectural plan of the proposed new north side branch library. It was planned by the architectural firm of Nelson and Fuchs from designs supplied by the library board of trustees.

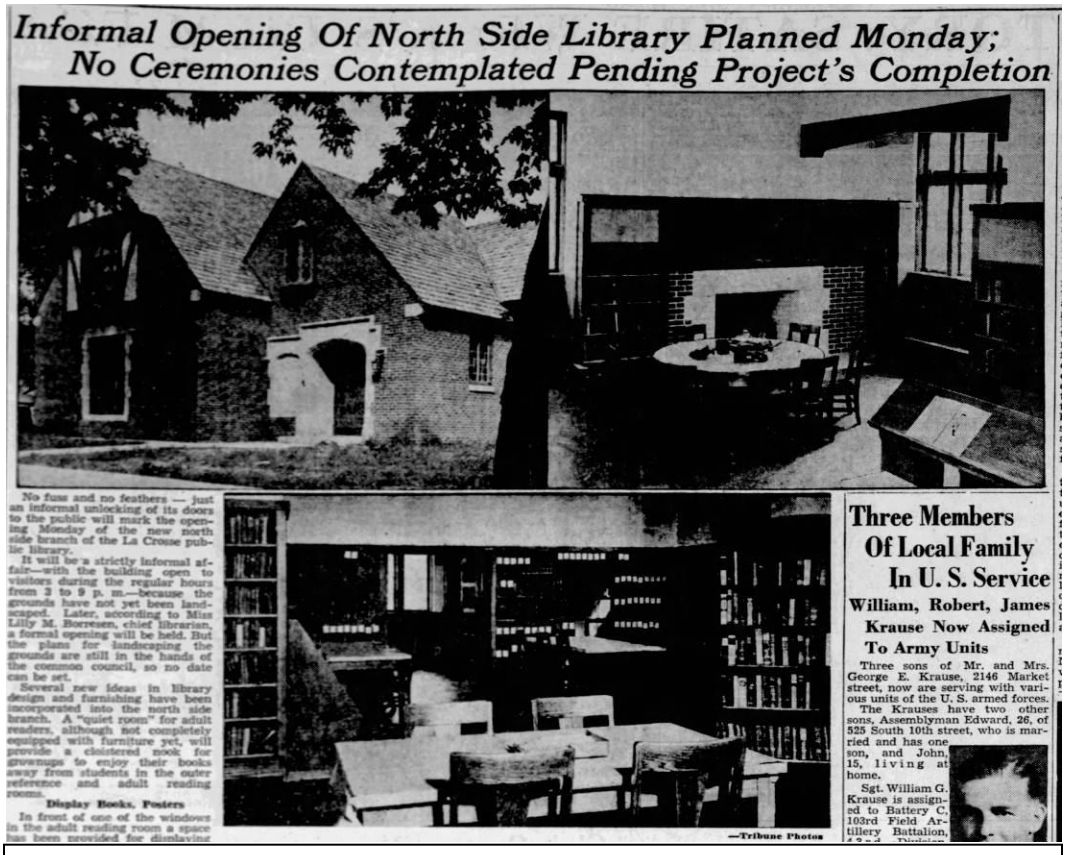
The building will be "T" shaped, with brick and tile walls and sloping single roof to correspond with the residential neighborhood in which it is located.

The top of the "T" will parallel Gillette street. The main entrance will open onto Kane street. Its size is 80 by 80 feet overall.

In the basement will be the furnace and fuel rooms, a book storage room and a fair sized club room for meetings of women's reading circles and other such groups.

On the main floor will be a juvenile room, adult room, general reading room, reference room, quiet room, stack room, work room and staff room.

Figure 82 – Architect's rendering of the library from the October 2, 1941, La Crosse Tribune, Courtesy of the La Crosse Public Library Archives.



Informal Opening Of North Side Library Planned Monday; No Ceremonies Contemplated Pending Project's Completion

No fuss and no feathers — just an informal unlocking of its doors to the public will mark the opening Monday of the new north side branch of the La Crosse public library.

It will be a strictly informal affair—with the building open to visitors during the regular hours from 3 to 9 p. m.—because the grounds have not yet been landscaped. Later, according to Miss Lilly M. Borresen, chief librarian, a formal opening will be held. But the plans for landscaping the grounds are still in the hands of the common council, so no date can be set.

Several new ideas in library design and furnishing have been incorporated into the north side branch. A "quiet room" for adult readers, although not completely equipped with furniture yet, will provide a cloistered nook for grownups to enjoy their books away from students in the outer reference and adult reading rooms.

Display Books, Posters

In front of one of the windows in the adult reading room a space has been provided for displaying

—Tribune Photos

Three Members Of Local Family In U. S. Service

William, Robert, James Krause Now Assigned To Army Units

Three sons of Mr. and Mrs. George E. Krause, 2146 Market street, now are serving with various units of the U. S. armed forces.

The Krauses have two other sons, Assemblyman Edward, 26, of 525 South 10th street, who is married and has one son, and John, 15, living at home.

Sgt. William G. Krause is assigned to Battery C, 103rd Field Artillery Battalion,

Figure 83 – Photos of library completion from the August 30, 1942, La Crosse Tribune. Courtesy of the La Crosse Public Library Archives.

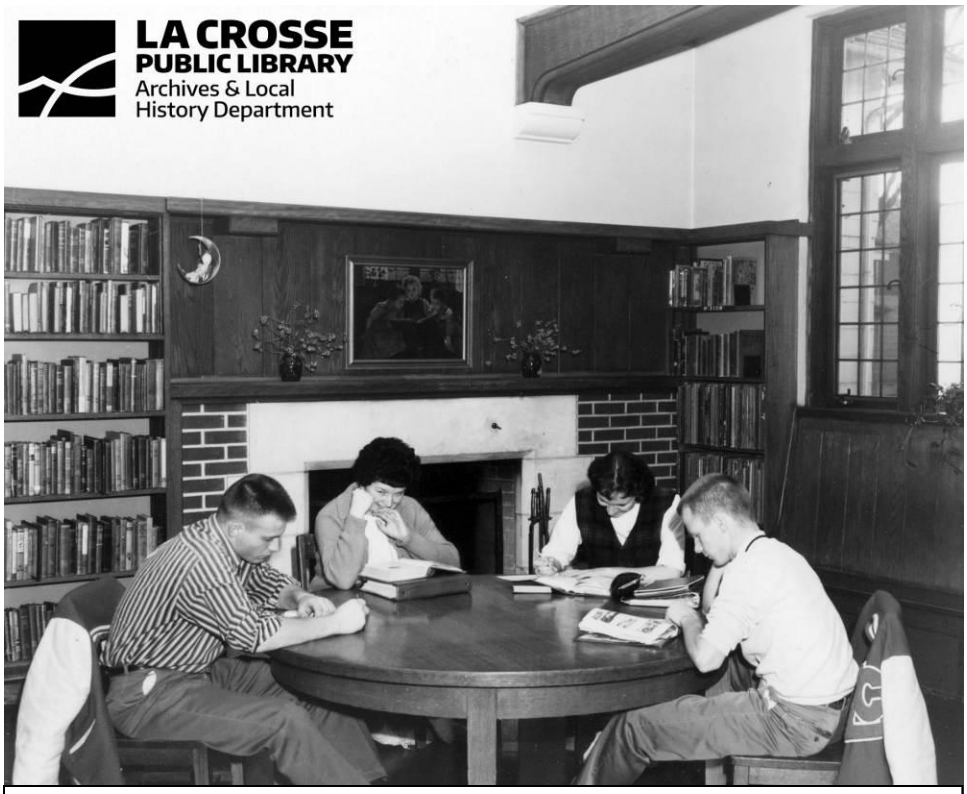


Figure 84 – View looking at fireplace in main library. Date Unknown. Courtesy of La Crosse Public Library Archives.

Figure 85 – View looking at north reading nook in main library. Date Unknown. Courtesy of La Crosse Public Library Archives.

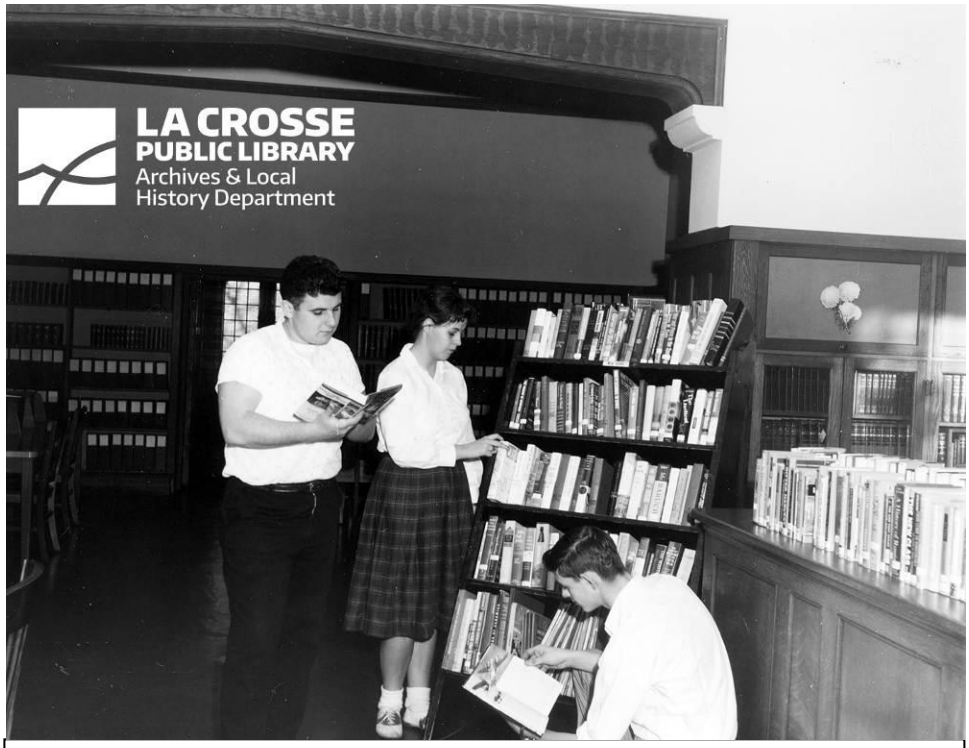


Figure 86 – View looking east at reading room and circulation desk. Date Unknown. Courtesy of La Crosse Public Library Archives.

Figure 87 –View looking east at the front of the library. Circa 1944. Courtesy of the UW – La Crosse Murphy Library Special Collections.

Figure 88 –View looking southeast from corner of Gillette and Kane Streets. Circa 1977. Courtesy of the UW – La Crosse Murphy Library Special Collections.

Figure 89 –View looking southwest at the back of the library. Circa 1977. Courtesy of the UW – La Crosse Murphy Library Special Collections.

Figure 90 –View looking at main gable of library. Circa 1977. Courtesy of the UW – La Crosse Murphy Library Special Collections.

Figure 91 –View looking northeast at main entry. Circa 1977. Courtesy of the UW – La Crosse Murphy Library Special Collections.

Figure 92 –View looking east at the small south gable. Circa 1977. Courtesy of the UW – La Crosse Murphy Library Special Collections.

Figure 93 –View looking north at main reading room. Circa 1980. Photo by E. Hill, Courtesy of the UW – La Crosse Murphy Library Special Collections.

Figure 94 –View looking north at main reading room ceiling. Circa 1980. Photo by E. Hill, Courtesy of the UW – La Crosse Murphy Library Special Collections.

Figure 95 –View looking south at main reading room. Circa 1980. Photo by E. Hill, Courtesy of the UW – La Crosse Murphy Library Special Collections.

Figure 96 –View looking fireplace and reading nook. Circa 1980. Photo by E. Hill, Courtesy of the UW – La Crosse Murphy Library Special Collections.

Figure 97 –View looking south at main entrance. Circa 1980. Photo by E. Hill, Courtesy of the UW – La Crosse Murphy Library Special Collections.

Figure 98 –View looking southwest at circulation desk. Circa 1980. Photo by E. Hill, Courtesy of the UW – La Crosse Murphy Library Special Collections.

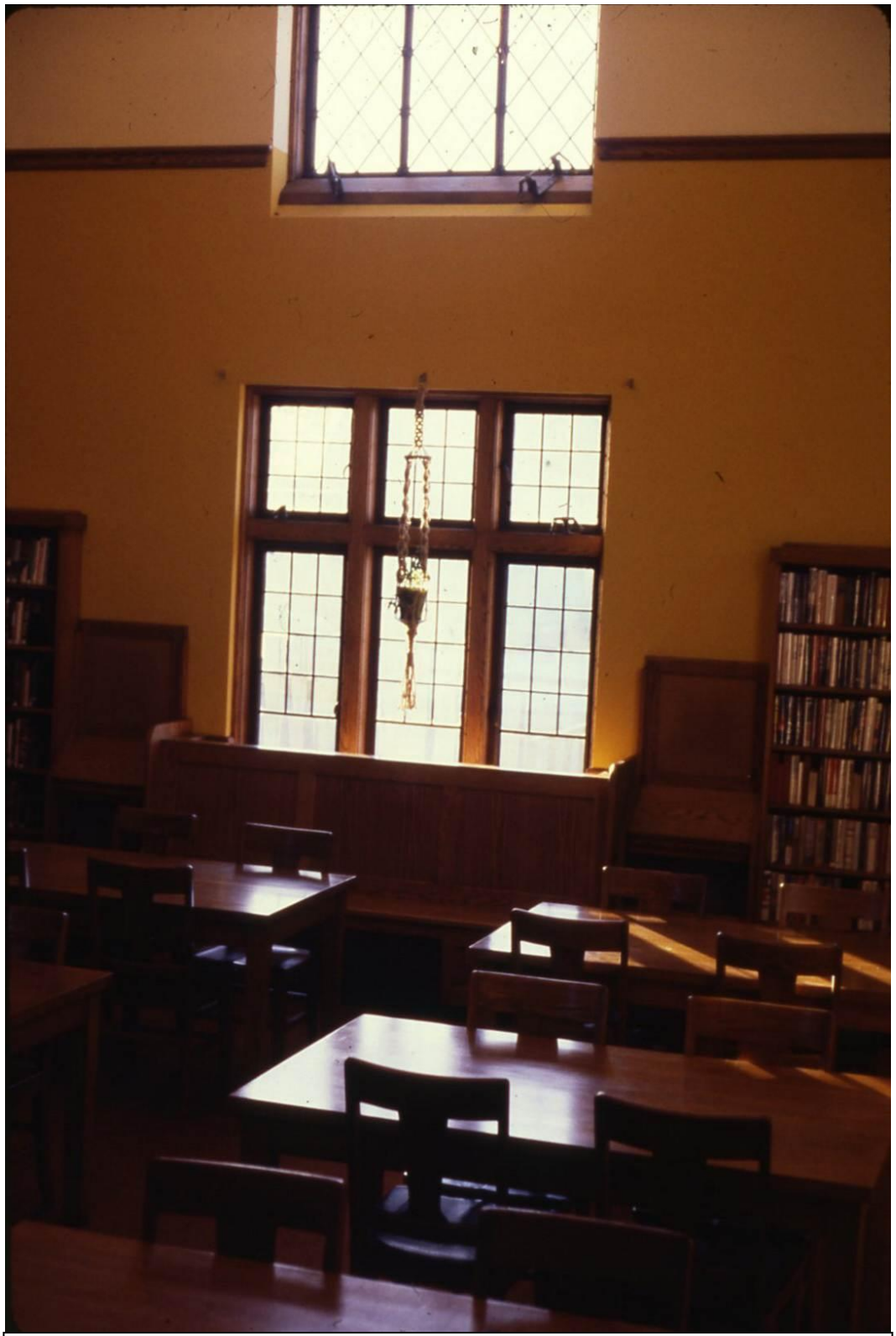


Figure 99 –View looking west at north reading area. Circa 1980. Photo by E. Hill, Courtesy of the UW – La Crosse Murphy Library Special Collections.

Figure 100 –View looking east at small reading room. Circa 1980. Photo by E. Hill, Courtesy of the UW – La Crosse Murphy Library Special Collections.

Chapter 06:
Conceptual Design

A. Preservation Objectives:

Overview:

The North Community Library is a significant piece of La Crosse's past and contributes to the tangible historic significance of the community. The top priority is to preserve the exterior and rehabilitate the interior, potentially for a new use. It has great potential for many different uses that need wide open spaces such as a restaurant, community center, or office. The challenge will be rehabilitating the building to a level where code required updates won't exceed the budget. The preservation plan for the building will make a new accessible entry, minor masonry repairs and roofing repairs/upgrades on the exterior, with potentially significant remodeling work on the interior.

Methodology:

The recommendations and professional opinions in this chapter are based on the data that was available at the time of writing this document, and could change significantly with new findings in both historical research and physical evidence from the structure itself.

Many dates of modifications were provided by Director Trane of the City of La Crosse Planning Department.

It is the hope of the project team that when additional information is obtained, it will be added to this document for future building occupants.

Terms:

The following is a very basic list of vocabulary that will be used throughout this chapter. This list is not meant to be exhaustive, but rather a quick reference of the different preservation treatments available for use on historic projects. This list can also be found at the beginning of Chapter Two.

Preservation - means to keep the building looking as it does today. This approach halts further deterioration of the structure. Changes that have occurred over time are allowed to remain in their current state.

Restoration - is far more intensive than preservation. In restoration, a period of significance is chosen and the building is returned to the way it looked at that moment in time. Features added after this period are removed and any features that were associated with the structure at that period may be recreated and incorporated back into the structure. Damaged elements still in existence are repaired and brought back to their original condition.

Rehabilitation - changes the historic use of a structure to give the building a new occupancy, while retaining much of its historic integrity. This approach is often much less sympathetic to the building than the above approaches.

Reconstruction - recreates portions or an entire structure that has been destroyed or demolished. Detailed research and craftsmanship is critical when reconstructing any element to try to make it look authentic.

Replication - creates an additional copy of an existing structure, or portion thereof. Many times this copy is in a different location.

Conservation - protects the existing features of a historic structure. Work is often carried out to protect and correct deterioration to the existing structure.

Additions - are often needed to accommodate changing needs in the structure. All additions should be clearly differentiated from the historic structure.

Period of Significance:

The North Community Library at 1552 Kane Street has a long period of significance, beginning with the completion of the structure in 1942 and continuing up to the current time (2026) since the building is still being used for its original purpose. An appropriate period of restoration for the library would be any time before 1976 (50 years ago), which is generally the age when a building can be considered historic. There have been no major additions or insensitive renovations, so the period of restoration is not a huge issue for this project.

Treatment Approach:

It is recommended that the buildings have the exterior preserved in Phase 1. The exterior repairs to the building are required so any roof leaks will not ruin new interior finishes. Another reason for exterior work being done first is to keep maintenance costs down. A small amount of tuckpointing now will help keep the building more weather tight and adding new flashing, gutters and downspouts will help to protect the masonry. The rehabilitation of the first floor is also part of Phase 1 since it will be required for any new use. Phase 2 will likely consist of rehabilitating the basement. This building is not currently eligible for historic tax credits, which could help offset some construction costs. The work on this building will be done in two primary phases, with smaller future phases for routine maintenance.

It should also be noted that the entire philosophy of preserving historic structures is to save as much of the existing building fabric as possible. The most sensitive and least disturbing course of action is the one that must be evaluated first in each and every case. More intensive intervention is only acceptable when less intrusive means will not get the job done properly.

Sustainability is also an integral part of each building rehabilitation. Ignoring inefficiencies is no longer an option. When insulation can be added in a space that is opened up, its effectiveness should be evaluated. When systems are replaced, new efficient systems, especially mechanical equipment, should be evaluated. Historic buildings need not be LEED Certified; however, cracked leaky windows and un-insulated attics are not acceptable. There is a balance that must be met, and part of the job of your Preservation Architect is to see that this balance is achieved.

It must not be forgotten that this whole process should be documented. After all, this building contributes to the community of La Crosse as a whole. The rehabilitation of this building can and should be utilized as an educational tool for the area schools as well as history lovers, and anyone interested in the field of architecture. The story of this building continues each and every day. Today's news is tomorrow's history.

B. Program Analysis:

Overview:

The North Community Library will likely soon have a new use bringing an end to the library era. The building has had very few modifications over the years, which has left an amazing amount of historic building fabric intact.

Site:

This site is embedded into a residential area across from an elementary school. It has high visibility from Gillette Street, but is not visible from George Street. Other factors important to site analysis are accessibility and drainage. The front door functions as the accessible entry point. It has no steps and the pair of doors is wide enough to get a wheelchair through, but both doors must open at the same time to be wide enough. It would be better to have an accessible entry at the back of the building leading to the parking area. The parking area requires at least one accessible space and must connect with an accessible path to the building (unless the property is converted to a single family home or duplex). Due to the site sloping down from front to back, it would require a ramp up to the back door. Roof drainage is an issue. There are a lot of gables and dormers that channel water into pinch points on the roof. The building once had gutters and downspouts, but it currently does not. This is causing the ground around the building to become saturated which then soaks into the walls and foundations. Wet masonry deteriorates much faster than dry masonry. Most of the area around the building is pervious which does help contain runoff.

Exterior:

The exterior of the building is in fairly good condition. There are some small areas of masonry that will need to be tuckpointed. As long as the current windows are holding up, there is no need to replace them. When seams open up, or the gaskets fail on the double-pane glass, new energy efficient windows that are closer to the historic design can be installed. The stucco should be checked to see if it is still bonded to the backup material. The wood trim needs to be cleaned, primed and repainted. Areas of sealant need to be replaced. The roof should have the small leak(s) investigated and repaired. In the next 10-15 years, the slate roof will probably need a major repair done. This is typically called a “lift and relay” project. It all depends on how the underlayment and fasteners are holding up. Slate roofs are extremely durable and outlast most other kinds of roofing.

Basement:

The basement of the building has been used as meeting and storage/mechanical space. The building systems have some serviceable life left, so a major upgrade may not be needed at this time. The amount of work depends on the new use for the space. It makes sense to keep most of the building systems in the basement and rise up to the first floor where needed. Any new floor penetrations should be carefully located, cutting through a concrete joist will require structural corrections to stabilize the adjacent floor, while cutting through the clay tile pans will be much less intrusive. It did not look like there was much water infiltration in the basement, and the little bit that was noticed may be corrected by adding gutters and downspouts to the roof. If a more intensive commercial use goes into the basement there will be code requirements. Egress routes may change, more restrooms could be required, the building systems may need to be completely reconfigured, etc. ADA compliant restrooms and an accessible route may be required to the basement. Until the use of the building is finalized, specifics won’t be known.

First Floor:

There are two approaches to the first floor. The first would be to work with the existing architecture and try to gently insert a new use into the building. This is the preferred method and would be a requirement if historic tax credits are being pursued. It would mean leaving spaces minimally altered, such as preserving the build-in benches and book shelves and keeping the main spaces of the library as open as possible. It would also mean keeping the window locations and sizes as close to their current configuration as possible. An ADA compliant entry and accessible route must be achieved on the first floor. One benefit to having the building listed as a historic structure is that only one accessible entry is required. Non-historic buildings are required to have at least two-thirds of their entry points be accessible. Accessible restrooms will also be required for anything other than a single family home or duplex use.

The other approach would be a gut rehab. These types of renovations typically are not eligible for historic tax credits since so much of the historic building finishes are lost in the process. Code and ADA requirements will have a major impact on this approach as well.

Possible Uses:

There are a number of viable uses for this building beyond being a public library. A few of the many options are listed below:

Assembly: The library is currently an assembly use. It could be converted to another assembly use with minimal change if done intelligently. Other assembly uses include restaurants, taverns, banquet halls, community centers, museums, art galleries, and places of worship to name a few. The concrete floor structure is very sturdy, but should still be evaluated by a structural engineer once the new use is determined. It is probable that this floor meets current code for many assembly live load requirements. The number of restrooms will depend on the use and the occupancy of the building. Generally speaking, food and drink establishments require more plumbing fixtures than community halls and galleries. The total occupant load would also determine if the building will be required to have fire sprinklers or not. For example, taverns are required to have fire sprinklers when the occupancy reaches 100 people, while for community halls the threshold is 300 people. If the community hall serves alcohol then the threshold may drop to 100 people. One can see that the code is applied on a case by case basis. ADA upgrades will be required such as accessible restrooms, at least one entry, and an accessible route to all primary function spaces. The mechanical and electrical may be able to remain largely unchanged.

Business: This building would convert to an office or multiple offices quite well. It has large wide open spaces and nooks that can be used for work stations and meeting spaces. The book shelves would be great for a law firm or accountant's office. The restroom requirements are much lower for business uses and very few business spaces require fire sprinklers. ADA requirements would still be needed for this use.

Institutional: This space could be used for a daycare whether child or adult. The wide open spaces would be good for supervision. Depending on the level of care provided, modifications could be more extensive than a business or assembly use. Unless a very strict set of exceptions are met, the building would be required to have fire sprinklers installed.

Mercantile: The building would convert well to a retail store. The biggest issue with retail is not the building, but the location. It would be surrounded by residential uses. If the building were on George Street, retail might be a viable option, but being on Kane and Gillette, it just doesn't have enough traffic. ADA would still

apply, but the number of restrooms would be minimal. Most retail options would not require a fire sprinkler system, but some, such as upholstered furniture, may require the building to have fire sprinklers installed.

Residential: This building could simply be converted into a single family home or a duplex. This would allow the building to be designed under the Uniform Dwelling Code, instead of the full commercial code. ADA would not apply in this instance. Fire sprinklers would not be required. Cutting the building up into more apartments would trigger major code required updates. Fire separation of 1 hour between floors and dwelling units would be required for apartment, hotel, or AirBnB uses. These residential occupancies require a fire sprinkler system throughout the building. The existing window locations will also be an issue since many of the windows are high on the walls. Every bathroom and kitchen will need new plumbing penetrations drilled through the concrete floor structure. The existing mechanical and electrical systems are not set up for many individual dwelling units and would need significant changes, or total replacement.

Summary: It is the author's opinion that a new assembly or business use would be the highest and best use of the building, but some light residential (single family or duplex) might also be viable. Trying to change the building too significantly from what it was historically will be difficult to accomplish without destroying the essence of the structure.

C. Recommendations:

Overview:

This section summarizes the work that needs to be done to the building. It is important to remember that, due to the nature of historic preservation projects, additional situations will be discovered as portions of the building are worked on. That is why it is imperative to always have some extra financing set aside in a construction contingency. The following items have been organized from actions that must be done immediately to items that can be done in the near future. It may prove cost effective to take certain items with a moderate priority and add them to a project earlier in the preservation campaign.

A Preservation Architect should be hired to work on drawings and specifications for the building before any project is undertaken, to make sure the historic building is treated properly. The Preservation Architect will also be the Owner's Representative during the construction process to work with contractors, code officials and preservation officials to create a high-quality finished product.

Phase 1 – Immediate Work:

Hazardous Materials: Asbestos abatement, if asbestos is found, will be required to be completed prior to any contractors arriving on site. Asbestos, when it is in the work area, must either be encapsulated or abated by a licensed asbestos contractor. The contractor will need to be certified to work with lead paint.

First Floor Renovation: The first floor has always been used as a library. This floor should be rehabilitated for the new owner/tenant. The actual design will vary significantly depending on what kind of use moves into the building. An assembly use may only need minor reconfiguration and would keep the large open spaces. An office could have work stations in the wide open space, or may have smaller, enclosed office spaces created. Residential uses will divide up the space into many smaller rooms and areas and will require fire separation between individual units and common spaces.

Figure 101 – Most of the square footage of the main floor is wide open space (2026).

An ADA compliant entry from the primary parking and an accessible route through the first floor will be required for all commercial uses and residential uses when there are three or more dwelling units. The accessible route through the first floor is required even if no elevator is installed. At a minimum, two legal exits will be required from both floors because of the length of the building. If the building is used as a single family home, then the requirements will be less stringent. Building systems will be a mixture of new and existing and are discussed in the following sections. Preserving the essence of the library will be important if historic tax credits are pursued. This means that the interpretation of the main spaces must remain legible, wood trim, book cases and other built-ins should be preserved, and the plaster ceilings should remain exposed in most locations. The main stair to the basement may be able to utilize the historic building code provisions to have a smoke separation rather than a fire separation, or to potentially remain open depending on the building occupancy. The restroom

configuration and size will vary considerably depending on the building use and the maximum occupancy numbers.

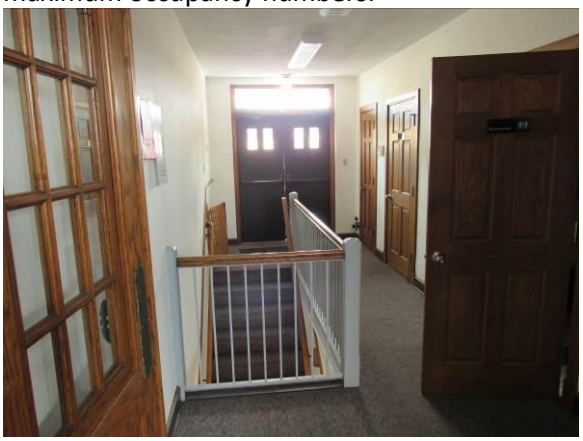


Figure 102 – The back entry and restrooms are not currently accessible (2026).

Gutters and Downspouts: The building originally had half round gutters and downspouts, but there are currently none on the building. This has created a continual moisture issue with the masonry walls, especially near grade. New half round gutters and downspouts should be added to the building as soon as possible. This will direct water away from the building and increase the life span of the mortar joints. The small leak(s) in the roof should be found and repaired. The longer these leaks are allowed to remain, the worse they can get and the greater the potential for rot in the roof structure and damage to the interior finishes. The small gable at the southwest corner of the building is missing a ridge cap and a couple of slate shingles may be loose/missing. This is a logical place to start looking for a roof leak. Slate shingle roofs often have a life span of 80-100 years. This roof shows some signs of wear, but it does not appear that a major roof project needs to be part of Phase I. The larger roof project will be discussed under Phase II. All roof flashings should be evaluated to check for breaks and other possible areas where leaks are occurring.

Figure 103 – The building originally had copper gutters and downspouts (2006).

ADA Upgrades: If the building will have a commercial use, or a residential use that falls under the International Building Code, then it will be subject to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). If accessible parking is provided in the back of the building, then the back door should be accessible. This would require removing the stairs at the back door and creating a new ramp. The back door will need to have at least one leaf that is 36" wide, minimum. The building code does provide some relief from ADA requirements compared to a new or non-historic existing building. Inside, new uses will require an accessible route including latch clearances at doors, replacement of door knobs with levers and/or exit devices, accessible restrooms/bathrooms with items such as grab bars, sinks mounted at the correct height and distance from the wall, toilets with the correct seat height and distance from the wall, etc. Any spaces that are considered "primary function" spaces will need to have an accessible route to them. If the basement has "primary function" uses, it will need an elevator unless an exception is granted. The basement will be discussed as part of Phase II. Another important consideration for ADA compliance is placing things within the required reach ranges. Floor outlets generally do not comply with ADA requirements, but not all

outlets need to be within the required ranges. Light switches, countertop heights, mirrors, and even electrical panels all have height restrictions defined in the ADA.

Figure 104 – The restrooms nearly comply with ADA requirements, but are still deficient in a few areas (2026).

Plumbing: Most of the plumbing will probably be redone if a new use goes into the building. Residential and restaurant occupancies generally have more intensive plumbing requirements than many other occupancies. New sanitary lines will more than likely be PVC which has mostly replaced cast iron. New supply lines will probably be either Pex or copper. Any old galvanized steel lines should be removed and replaced. Supply and drain lines should be run in the basement whenever possible. It should be noted that any new penetrations through the floor structure should miss the concrete ribs/joists. Going through a joist area rather than a pan area (hollow clay tile) will create a significant amount of damage to the floor structure. The water heater is only a few years old, it still has serviceable life left, but may be over or undersized depending on the new building occupancy.

If fire sprinklers are required for the new occupancy, a new water service will be needed from the street into the building. This should be sized appropriately for the new fire sprinkler system. This would be a significant cost. Fire sprinklers will be required before any residential occupancy in the building with more than two dwelling units, or a combination of one commercial use and one dwelling unit.

Most of the roof drainage has been previously discussed with gutters and downspouts. The flat roof areas have roof drains and scuppers. The drain lines may need to be reconfigured depending on the rehabilitation efforts. The roof drain leaders should discharge to grade, away from the building, or be hard piped into the storm sewer.

Figure 105 – The water heater is fairly new, circa 2024 (2026).

HVAC: According to City records, the mini-boilers in the basement were installed in 2020 and still have quite a bit of serviceable life left. The City has upgraded the HVAC system over the years and it appears that most of the equipment is from this century. The climate changer and humidifier are identified as being from 2002, and may be nearing the end of their serviceable life. The air conditioning is identified as being installed in 2022. Parts of the system could remain in service if the new building use is compatible with the existing system. Assembly or office use may be able to save costs on a renovation project by reusing as much of the existing equipment and ductwork as is feasible. If a residential use goes into the building, it may be more difficult to justify keeping the existing HVAC for the building. This

is because individual dwelling units generally are better served by a stand-alone system within the unit.

Figure 106 – The mini-boilers were installed circa 2020 (2026).

A coordinated design could minimize the reconfiguration of ductwork which would also be a cost savings to the project. This all depends on the desired building use and the layout of spaces. Much of the ductwork is incorporated into the built-in furnishings within the first floor such as the benches and bookcases. The final decision of the HVAC system should be based on efficiency, ability to install in the existing spaces and the familiarity with the system by local installers, not just the cost. If individual temperature zones are needed and the existing system is unable to provide for specific needs, a small auxiliary system such as a heat pump/mini-split could be installed to keep specific areas at a different temperature without replacing the entire system. Central HVAC systems are more difficult to zone for specific needs which leads to some rooms being hot and others being cold. Currently, the building is mostly a wide-open space that benefits from a larger central system. As stated in the mechanical analysis, the system is well maintained and can remain in service for years to come unless a change in building use makes this system less viable.

Electrical: The electrical service may need to be redone depending on the occupancy. It is recommended that if new service is provided that the overhead service drop be removed and replaced with underground service. The existing conduit is not in good condition and there is only a single meter, which is acceptable for a single tenant, but adding additional tenants will require more meters.

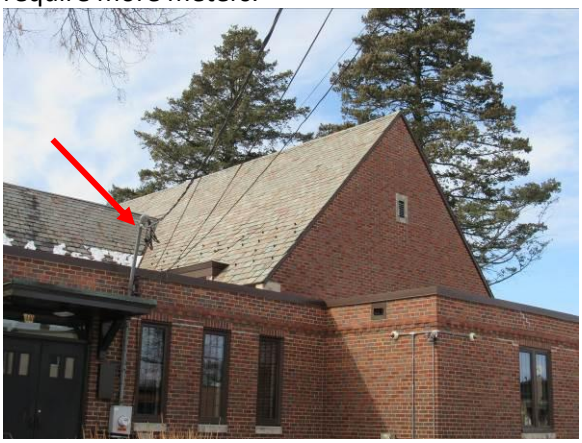


Figure 107 – Existing electrical service has seen better days, underground service would be a big upgrade (2026).

Inside the building, the electrical system has been upgraded at various points over the years. Lighting in the main library was upgraded to modern LED fixtures circa 2021. There is a mixture of hard conduit and flex conduit in the basement and in the attic. Data and power is run primarily in the basement and attic as well. No knob and tube wiring was noticed while on site, but that doesn't mean it doesn't exist on the property. For the most part, it looks like most of the electrical has been upgraded beyond the original wiring and many areas have modern conduit. Any new wiring needs to be run in conduit and it would be beneficial to have additional outlets and switches added. Any new layout or building use will require different electrical needs, thus requiring modifications. Installing a better wireless network for the building would be a good idea if the building will be an assembly use or an office use, it may

not be essential if the building will be used for residential.

Figure 108 – Modern LED light fixtures and newer ceiling fans are in the main library space (2026).

Figure 109 – Some older fluorescent fixtures remain in the basement (2026).

The lighting will probably need significant modification depending on the new use of the building. The back parts of the building and basement have rooms with minimal lighting that would benefit from additional light fixtures, or more efficient light fixtures. While the first floor was upgraded to efficient LED fixtures in many locations, there were still some T8 fluorescent lights, especially in the basement. Any bulb fixtures can have screw-in type LED bulbs that can replace incandescent bulbs without changing out the entire light fixture. LED strip lights give more light with less energy than fluorescent lights. Emergency egress lighting with battery backups will need to be redone based on any changes to the building layout.

Fire, Smoke Alarms and Security System: The requirement for a fire alarm system will be dependent on the building's future occupancy. Some uses require a fire alarm system while it is optional in other occupancies. A hard-wired smoke alarm system shall be installed at a minimum. The existing security system appears to provide very good coverage of the interior and exterior of the building. It would be nice if the security system was less visually intrusive especially on the exterior of the building.

Figure 110 – The building has numerous security cameras, but they could have been installed to be more sympathetic to the architecture (2026).

Phase 2 – High Priority Work:

Basement Renovation: The basement has some potential for usable space. The two meeting rooms flank the main stair. It would be difficult to make these rooms accessible, but if the same uses are provided on the main level and disproportionality of an elevator can be documented during building code review, some of the basement could have usable space for the upstairs occupancy. Historic doors and trim should be retained, but new wider doors may be required to enter into these rooms. The ceiling in the large meeting room should be removed and replaced if this room is to be used for anything more than storage or mechanical. The fiber tile ceiling has some loose tiles, is covering existing ductwork, and has exposed conduit and wire mould surface mounted in some areas.

Figure 111 – The basement meeting rooms could be upgraded depending on the building occupancy (2026).

The mechanical spaces are clean and logically laid out, it makes sense to keep these spaces for mechanical equipment. The north part of the basement is only partially excavated and will probably remain miscellaneous storage with any building use.

Figure 112 – The mechanical spaces are very clean and organized (2026).

The second stair is a great benefit to complying with egress requirements. New handrails and perhaps a new anti-slip coating could be added to the existing stairs.

Roof/Dormers: The roof is currently covered with slate shingles in the gabled areas and EPDM over the low-slope areas. The slate is original, and had repairs done in 1992 according to city records. Slate roofs generally have a life span of 80-100 years before a major repair is done. This major repair is called a “lift and relay”. Many times most of the slates are still in good condition, but the nails holding them in place either work loose or rust which allows the slates to become loose. A lift and relay allows any areas of the roof deck that have deteriorated to be replaced, new metal (preferably copper) flashing to be installed, new underlayment to be installed (usually a combination of a product like ice and water shield and roofing felt, either regular or synthetic) and finally new nails used to fasten the old slates back on the roof for many more decades of service. At the time of this report there was a stack of extra slate shingles in the basement. The reason this work is in Phase II is because the current condition of the roof does not require immediate reroofing, but in 10-15 years this project will become a much higher priority. If money is available, then it would

save money to move this item to Phase I when the gutters and downspouts are installed.

Figure 113 – There are some damaged slate shingles on the roof (2026).

There are two areas of low slope (flat) roofs. The high roof is over the main gable running north-south. According to city records, this roof was installed in 2002 and may be nearing the end of its serviceable life. EPDM roof systems usually have a warranty period of 20-30 years and are usually ready for replacement within 10 years of the warranty period ending. The lower flat roofs were reroofed in 2016 according to city records and are still under warranty. City staff stated that warranty work was recently done to the flat roof. Since this roof is still under warranty any changes such as adding a new penetration for a vent, pipe, etc. should be done by a certified installer to keep the warranty in place.

Outbuilding/Addition: There is potentially room for an addition on the rear of the building, but creating an addition will probably reduce the amount of parking on site and/or require relocating mechanical and electrical equipment. If the addition is designed to delicately connect to the existing building, many of the existing windows could be retained. If a business moved into the building and needs to expand, an addition could be added at a later date. Another option would be to have an outdoor dining area/patio if a restaurant would move into the building. There is currently a storage shed on the property. It is unclear if the city would take this structure if the property is sold.

Figure 114 – There is currently a storage shed in the southeast corner of the property (2026).

Windows: City records indicate that the existing windows were installed circa 2007. These windows have held up well over the past 19 years. It is too bad that the original steel windows with leaded glass were removed, but they were probably very inefficient. Good replacement windows can last 30-40 years or longer, but lower quality windows can fail in 10-15 years. The important thing to watch on these windows is the glass itself. When the seals between the panes of glass start to fail, the windows generally “fog up” where condensation occurs between the panes of glass. The frames can also fail by opening up on the seams. When these windows begin to show signs of failure, they should be replaced with new windows that are closer in appearance to the original windows. The original windows were steel with leaded glass, so the new windows could be a modern thermally broken aluminum unit with insulated glass and simulated divided lites to look like the old lead cames. The new window units will probably have insulated glass (double-pane filled with argon gas) with no tint. A low-E coating may be allowed but only if historic tax credits are not

pursued. The windows have some serviceable life left so replacing them is not a high priority.

Figure 115 – The original windows were still extant until the 2007 window replacement project (2006).

Figure 116 – The current windows have fake divided lites to mimic the lead cames (2026).

Phase 3 – Ongoing Maintenance:

Exterior Walls: Repointing of the brick and limestone will periodically be required. This will be an ongoing maintenance project for this building. A general rule of thumb is that the building should be evaluated about once every five years after a major tuckpointing project is completed to see if any new areas on the building need to be repaired. The wood trim will need to be repainted every five to ten years. Sealants should be evaluated every time the building is painted and replaced as needed.

Figure 117 – The wood trim should be cleaned, primed, and painted the next time any exterior work is done to the walls or roof (2026).

Finishes: Interior finishes can also be upgraded in the future, if desired. This work does not have a timeline and is not required.

Routine Maintenance: After construction is done, this building, like all buildings, will require routine maintenance. The roof should be monitored and repaired/replaced when leaks develop. Damaged or broken finishes should be repaired or replaced. Appliances should be serviced as recommended. The HVAC equipment will also age and will lose efficiency. Having the equipment regularly serviced will add to its life expectancy.

Rationale for Phasing:

The approach taken to preserve and restore this building is focused first on making the exterior of the building weather tight and restoring historic building elements. If this step is not completed first, then work done on the interior could be damaged by water infiltration. The second priority is to refurbish the first floor for a new occupant. This will provide an opportunity for the building to house a local business, start generating revenue to a developer, or provide housing. The building will utilize new and existing mechanical, electrical, fire sprinklers, and plumbing systems. Both floors of the building need to have code compliant egress and fire separations. If the total project cost stays low enough, then a commercial use moving into the building may be able to use the disproportionality rule to avoid installing a new passenger elevator at this time. There is a form that must be accepted by the building code official having jurisdiction. The second phase will focus on the basement. The final phase will be the ongoing maintenance to keep this landmark building viable for future generations.

Since the building is not currently listed on the State nor National Register of Historic Places, it is not eligible for historic tax credits at this time. The building will need to be individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places or contributing to a National Register Historic District, in order to pursue state and federal historic tax credits. This would offset some of the construction costs. The tax credits allow construction to get done at a high quality and discourage cutting corners. Currently historic tax credits cover up to 40% of eligible expenditures (QRE). The State Historic Tax Credits cover 20% of the QRE and the Federal Historic Tax Credits cover 20% of the QRE. One thing to note is that expenses related to site work and new additions do not count toward the tax credit QRE. Most work done inside the historic parts of the building are an eligible

expense such as structural reinforcing, new mechanical, electrical, fire sprinkler, and plumbing systems, refinishing floors, refinishing walls and ceilings with historically appropriate approved materials, etc. The National Park Service (NPS) and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) have documents further explaining the rules of the program. If substantial work is to be done, it is the author's opinion that it would be very beneficial to try and get this building listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Figure 118 – A local history plaque located just outside the library (2026).

D. Additional Testing Recommendations:

Overview:

The different types of testing listed below is not an exhaustive list, but rather a list of items that are needed for the successful restoration of the building. Due to changing technology and government regulations, certain tests should be completed just prior to construction on the project.

Asbestos Survey:

Currently, asbestos survey regulations are changing across the country and a licensed asbestos inspector should be employed for an official asbestos survey of the whole building. The inspector should provide proof that he/she is licensed to perform work in the state of Wisconsin. This survey must be completed prior to any contractor performing work on site.

Mortar Testing:

The mortar analysis is a critical component to work done in the first phase of this project. The mortar should be tested for composition to determine the amount of lime, aggregate, and residue. The aggregate should also be studied so that a match can be found when mixing new mortars. The mortar should be tested for its compressive strength.

Lead Testing:

It is highly probable that lead paint exists in and on this building. Testing could be done by a licensed professional, or it can be assumed that existing painted surfaces contain lead paint.

E. Maintenance Plan:

Site:

Action:	Frequency:
Check alley and walks for tripping hazards	Spring
Trim vegetation away from building	Fall

Exterior:

Action:	Frequency:
Paint exterior wood	Every 5-10 years
Check for bats, mice, termites, wasps, etc.	Spring and Fall
Clean gutters and downspouts	Spring and Fall
Check trim, windows, roof, and skylight	Spring
Check caulk, flashing and paint	Spring
Check roof vents	Fall
Drain hose bibs and other outdoor plumbing fixtures	Fall
Check for ice dams on roof	Winter

Interior:

Action:	Frequency:
Check fire extinguishers	Monthly
Change batteries in smoke and fire detectors	Six months
Check caulk around plumbing fixtures	Six months
Check toilet and sink shut off valves	Annually
Check traps and drains at sinks for leaks	Annually
Check for water in the basement	Spring and Fall
Check operation of and lubricate windows and doors	Spring
Check dehumidifier	Spring
Check all doors and windows for leaks	Summer during rain storms
Check attic for leaks	Summer during rain storms
Check interior for pests	Fall
Service furnace	Fall
Check and clean thermostat	Fall
Tighten knobs, pulls and hinges on doors and windows	As needed

End Notes:

The Items for the maintenance plan were compiled after researching home maintenance checklists from various sources. The two primary sources consulted were the following:

1. "Home Maintenance Checklist." www.myhomeideas.com, web, 2011.
2. National Center for Healthy Housing. "Healthy Homes Maintenance Checklist." www.centerforhealthyhousing.org, web, 2011.

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