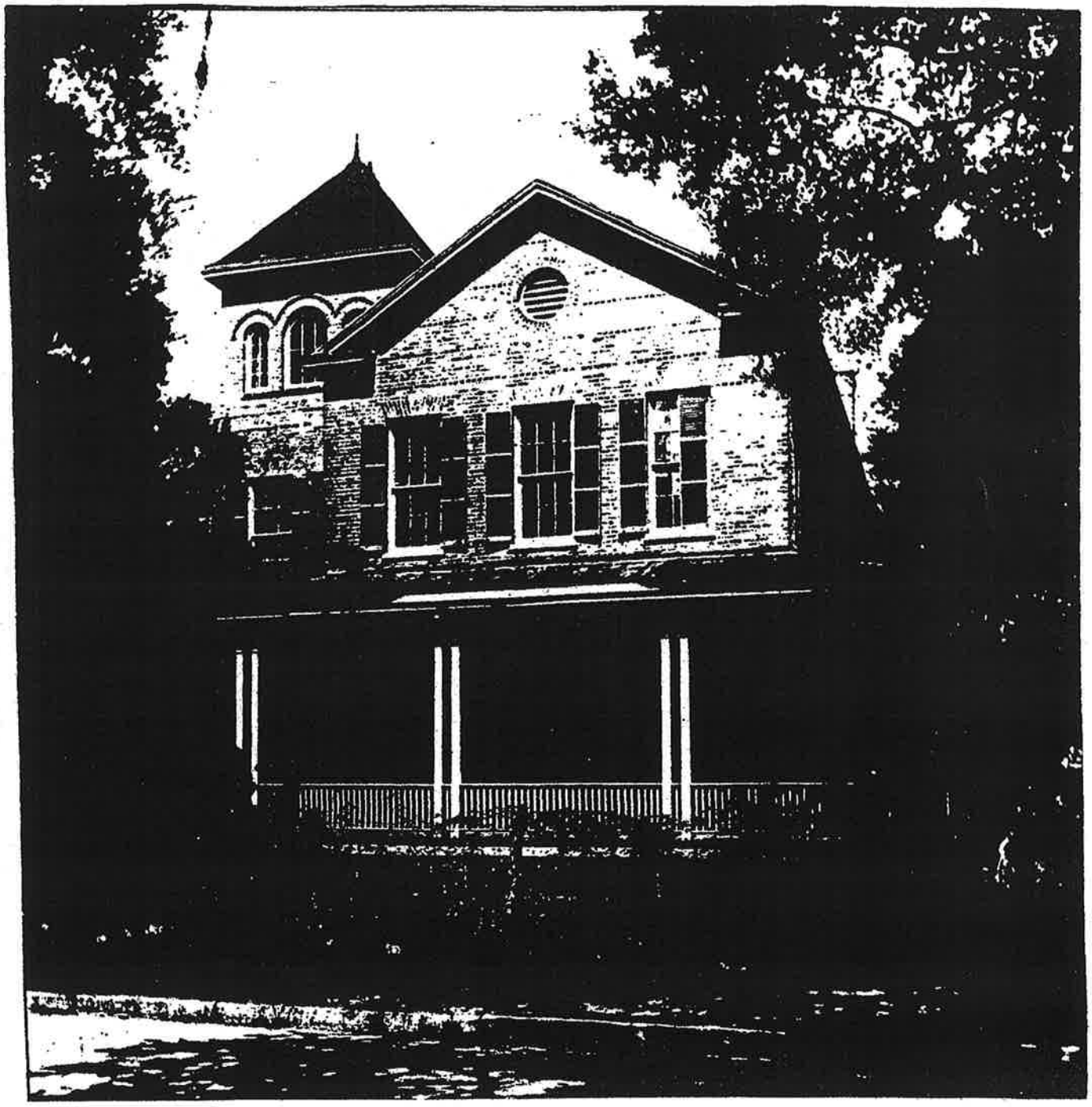
Condition Survey Report for St. Benedict's School and St. Benedict's Rectory



Condition Survey Report
of
St. Benedict's School
and
St. Benedict's Rectory

Prepared
for
Cathedral Parish
St. Augustine, Florida
March 15, 1998

Prepared
by
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Consultants:
S.K. Engineering
9 Beachcomber Way
St. Augustine, Florida 32095
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3940 Lewis Speedway
St. Augustine, Florida 32095

Introduction

At the request of Raymond Connor, representative for the Cathedral Parish of St. Augustine, I have conducted a condition survey of two buildings located at 86 M.L. King Ave. The survey reports on these two structures follow below. These reports, as directed by Mr. Connor, are not intended to be detailed in nature at this time. Rather the main purpose of the surveys is to determine: 1) the feasibility of renovation and restoration of the St. Benedict's School Building ; and 2) the extent of rehabilitation necessary to St. Benedict's Rectory Building to make it serviceable and attractive.

In order to assure a reliable investigation, I consulted with both an experienced licensed renovation contractor and a registered professional structural engineer. Their comments are included in this report. I have full confidence in and respect for these professionals. Mr. Vernon Davis, president and owner of A.D. Davis Construction Co., has extensive experience in renovation work of this nature having renovated the St. Augustine Lighthouse Keepers Residence and many projects on the old Ponce de Leon Hotel for Flagler College just to name a few. Mr. Steve Klecka, president of S.K. Engineering has likewise experience on many historical projects including the old Hastings High School building and the old Potter's Wax Museum building. Their comments are a critical part of this survey.

St. Benedict's School

St. Benedict's school Building located at the corner of M.L. King Ave. and DeHaven St. on the property of Cathedral Parish was constructed in 1898 as one of the first black schools the State of Florida. The structure comprises approximately 5576 square feet of space on three levels. The structure is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The facility ceased operation as a educational facility in the mid 1960's, and was then used sporadically for various Church related functions and activities until the mid 1980's when it was in essence abandoned.

At some point in time the N.E. section of the roof incurred some damage and was never repaired. As a result an area of the roof approximately 20ft x 20ft deteriorated to the point of collapse. With the roof gone weather was allowed to enter the building in this area resulting in further damage and rot to the second and first floor framing systems eventually causing total failure and collapse of these areas also. This comprises the most serious structural damage to the building that I can determine. Had the roof been repaired at the time of the initial damage the building would probably be in relatively good condition today.

Appearances can be very deceiving in old structures such as this. However things are not always as bad as they appear. The building's masonry foundation appears in fairly stable condition with the possible exception of one or two piers under the above mentioned collapsed roof area. The exterior masonry walls appear true and plumb and generally intact with the exception of the west facade above the entrance doors. Here shear cracks are visible in several places as well at the north facing wall adjacent to the entrance doors. There are two possible explanations for this cracking: 1) Water

has entered from above and run down behind the brick veneer and due to freeze/thaw action caused temperature related cracking. 2) The southeast corner of the 3 story tower section of the building may have settled slightly causing tension cracking to appear. This settling may be due to the roof and flooring systems failure previously mentioned. The settlement, if it actually exists, is very minimal and only discernible with a plumb bob. Mr. Klecka, the structural engineer, and I both agree that repair of the floor and roof framing would halt any further settlement and that no attempt is necessary to correct the existing settlement due to its minuscule nature. The superficial exterior cracking that is present would not be expensive to repair.

The stairs appear stable and structurally sound although worn and in need of cosmetic attention. The first floor framing, as observed from the crawl space, appears in fairly good condition with once again the exception of the area under the roof failure. Although termite damage is visible in some areas of the building, serious damage is not noticeable in the floor framing. The extent to which floor framing systems could be salvaged, however, would have to be determined by a more through examination by a licensed termite inspector and is beyond the scope of this survey.

I might mention at this point that my investigation of the building was somewhat hampered by the presence of junk and debris on the first floor. However I do not feel that this limited access effected the outcome of this report.

Although this report may sound somewhat glowing to this point, I do now wish to imply that serious problems do not exist. Problems that will be expensive to repair. I am saying however that in my opinion and the opinion of my consultants the structural integrity of the masonry shell and foundation appears intact or with minor work can be made sound.

As mentioned there are many areas that need attention. All windows and doors including finish hardware would need replacement. Extensive work on interior walls and ceilings is needed. Possible portions of the first and second floor framing will need replacement. Restrooms need complete renovation including new plumbing. The building would need complete electrical rewiring to bring it up to code. The wood flooring throughout the building would need replacing. New HVAC systems would have to be installed. Interior and exterior painting as well as landscaping is needed. Some decisions would need to be made as to whether or not to restore the building to its original configuration which consisted of a wrap around porch on all four sides (see cover photograph). The stage on the second floor was obviously added at a later date. Should it be eliminated in the restoration ?

Conclusion

Many problems need to be addressed concerning St. Benedict's School but the structural components appear salvageable. Both myself, Mr. Davis, and Mr. Klecka have worked on

restoration projects where deterioration has been much worse than present in this structure, and seen them brought back to beautiful working condition. The St. Augustine Lighthouse Keepers Residence is a case in point. I feel assured that St. Benedict's School could achieve the same success. Together with the adjacent open areas the potential to develop this property into a most needed community center is both exciting and possible.

If the decision is made to proceed with the restoration I would suggest the following procedure:

1) Selective demolition by a licensed and experienced demolition contractor. (Estimated cost: $25,000 to $30,000)
2) Preparation of restoration / architectural drawings including construction estimate.
3) Advertise for construction bids.
4) Construction. (Estimate cost: $300,000 to $500,000)

St. Benedict's Rectory

St. Benedict's Rectory is located adjacent to St. Benedict's Church on M. L. King Ave. and in close proximity to St. Benedict's School. The building dates to the early 1900's and has always been utilized as a pastoral residence and Church activities center. No one has resided in the building since the mid 1980's. Since then the building has been used primarily for Church socials.

My investigation revealed no major structural concerns. Some termite activity was noticed but without further inspection by termite specialists the degree of damage is unknown. I would not expect any damage to be extensive.

The most serious damage observed was at the exterior soffit overhangs where gutters have leaked and caused rot in several places. These damaged boards would need replacement and new gutters installed. No interior damage due to roof leaks was observed. The interior of the building needs considerable cosmetic attention. Wood floors need refinishing. New electrical wiring would probably be recommended to meet current code requirements. New lighting fixtures are needed. The building is presently heated by space heaters some gas and some electric. A new HVAC system would be recommended. Interior painting and possibly woodwork restoration is needed. Exterior brick needs cleaning and trim painted. The exterior porches at the rear of the building on the first and second levels have been enclosed. The decision would have to be made whether or not to leave them as is or return them to their original condition.

The kitchen needs modernization with new appliances and cabinetry. The bathrooms likewise need some upgrading also. New door hardware should be installed. New interior furnishings would enhance the facility greatly.

Conclusion

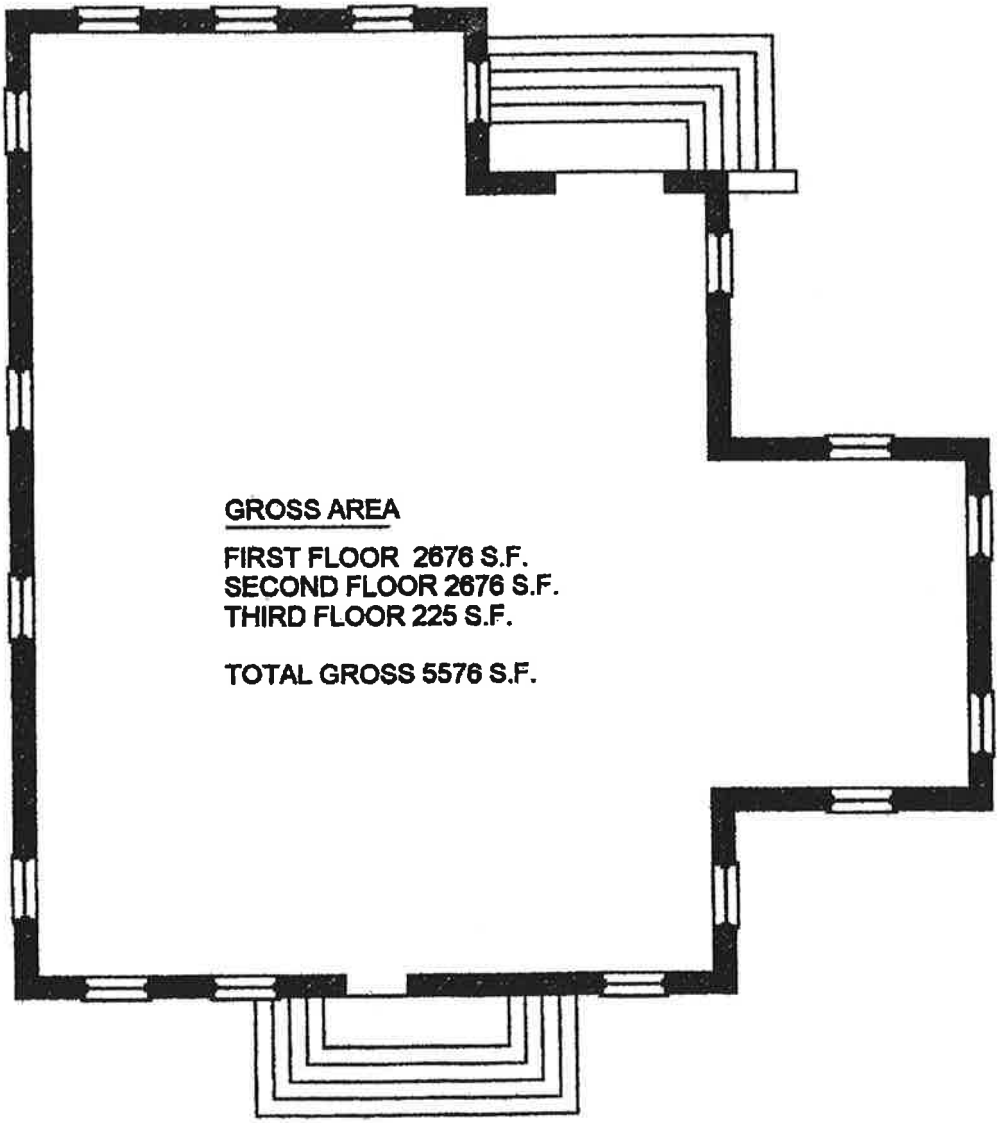
The Rectory Building, unlike the School, has been kept is service and therefore some maintenance has been performed on a continuing basis. Rehabilitation of this facility would be mainly cosmetic with the exception of electrical and HVAC work. Only minor repairs to the structure itself would be required to make it a functional, attractive building once again.

Summary

The location of the property is not within any historical preservation districts therefore no permitting or approvals are necessary from the preservation board. Only normal construction permits would be required.

I recommend that a master plan be prepared for the entire site in order to integrate all aspects of site development. Church parking, sidewalks, landscaping, and recreational areas could be planned and realized through phased construction. I feel the entire site offers a wonderful opportunity for a Church Community Center which is sorely needed. The restoration of St. Benedict's School would be the crowning jewel in this development.

I have both enjoyed and appreciated the opportunity to have conducted this survey for Cathedral Parish and look forward to future involvement with this and other projects.



ST. BENEDICT'S SCHOOL

A. D. DAVIS CONSTRUCTION CO., INC.

General Contractors

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March 10, 1998

Mr. Don Crichlow
24 Cathedral Place Suite 24
St. Augustine, Fl. 32084

RE: St. Benedict School
Martin Luther King Ave.
St. Augustine

Dear Don:

This letter is in regards to our site visit on March 6, 1998 to the above address. Upon inspection the building is in need of extensive repairs. The building can be renovated as it is in too good of condition to raze. I have been involved with projects that were in worse shape, and they were restored/renovated to a successful conclusion.

Therefore, it is my opinion that the building can be restored/renovated.

Sincerely Yours,

Vernon A. Davis
President

S K ENGINEERING
9 BEACHCOMBER WAY, ST.AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA 32095 (904) 825-0036

982-98

March 19, 1998

Don Crichlow
DCI and Associates
24 Cathedral, Suite 309
St.Augustine, Florida 32094

Inspection: St. Benedict School
Corner of Martin Luther King & DeHaven

S K Engineering contracted with the DCI and Associates to perform an initial on site structural inspection of the existing St. Benedict School based upon a limited field investigation. The purpose of the visual investigation was to make a report of building existing condition, address visible potential defects and recommend remedial action as required. Building limited visual inspection was on March 10, 1998.

Description

Existing 2 story building is constructed with brick masonry exterior walls and clay tile roof. The entrance foyer and stair tower is constructed with masonry walls and wood floor systems. The building first floor is wood flooring and joists system supported above grade by wood beams, brick masonry interior

foundation piers, and masonry walls. Second floor is wood flooring and joist system supported by wood beams, interior wood framed bearing walls and masonry walls. The roof structure is a conventionally framed wood rafter system. Presently the windows and exterior doors are covered with plywood and the first floor is used for storage.

Existing Conditions

Generally the exterior masonry walls are in good to fair condition except for the front entrance tower section. The brick masonry for the front entrance tower and connecting walls contain cracks and in several areas evidence of wall movement. This section of wall appears to be leaning at the top toward the center of the building.

The roof and floors are in fair condition except for the section with the failed roof. In one section approximately 15 % of the roof is missing and the framing has fallen in the building. The second and first floors below this section and supporting walls at one interior corner have failed or are in very poor condition. One roof supporting trussed beam connection to the corner has failed and the beam slid about one foot vertically down the wall. The brick foundation pier under this section is leaning and has settled. There is evidence of past termite damage in several areas and in the wood flooring.

Recommendations

The building is in good restorable condition with a majority of the damage in the area with the missing roof. This area requires total reconstruction of the floor systems, bearing

walls, foundation repair and a new roof structure. Front brick masonry entrance tower and connecting walls require restoration repairs and possibility foundation repair or underpinning to prevent further movement of the walls.

Recommend replacing the missing roof section to prevent any further damage and clean out the interior of the building. This will allow a more detailed structural inspection. The detailed inspection would require removal of some interior wall and ceiling surfaces for inspection of the concealed structural members and connections. The extent of termite and water damage and repairs necessary can be determined at the completion of the detailed structural inspection.

This is a visual inspection report and is not a warranty, neither stated nor implied. This inspection report solely certifies to the condition of the structure on the date of this inspection and this company assumes no responsibility for their performance or condition following the date of this inspection. If you have any questions concerning the enclosed report, please contact us. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Steven K. Klecka P.E.