

Architectural History Evaluation of the  
Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum  
(MO-PIK -00024)  
Little Falls, Morrison County, Minnesota

Submitted to:  
Morrison County Historical Society  
2151 Lindbergh Drive South  
Little Falls, Minnesota 56345

Prepared by:



Cultural Services LLC

207 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue North  
South St. Paul, MN 55075

Report Author:  
Andrea C. Pizza, Ph.D.

DRAFT - April 2024



## MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

The Morrison County Historical Society (MCHS) received a Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grant for a qualified historian to complete an evaluation of its building, the Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum (MI-PIK-00024), to determine its eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). The MCHS contracted with Deco Cultural Services LLC (Deco) to conduct the evaluation. The evaluation, which included a literature review and field documentation, was performed from November of 2023 to March of 2024. Andrea Pizza served as Principal Investigator.

Based on the evaluation, the Weyerhaeuser Museum is a particularly strong and highly intact representative of the post-1958 (state centennial) phase of the local history movement in Minnesota, which was marked by the symbiosis of the soaring interest in the history sector of the state's tourism industry with the development of standalone county museum facilities dedicated to the care, expansion, and improved presentation of collections. This phase, which continued through the 1970s and into the early 1980s, witnessed the construction of purpose-built facilities by approximately one-quarter of Minnesota's county historical societies.

The Weyerhaeuser Museum is significant at the local level under Criterion A in the areas of conservation and entertainment/recreation. As a building that is less than and continues to achieve significance into a period less than 50 years ago, the Weyerhaeuser Museum is subject to Criteria Consideration G, which states that properties meeting these conditions may only be eligible for listing in the National Register if they are of exceptional importance. While the museum is locally significant for its role in conservation and tourism pertaining to Morrison County's history, it does not rise to the level of exceptional significance. It is recommended that the Weyerhaeuser Museum will be eligible at the 50-year mark if it retains its integrity.

# CONTENTS

MANAGEMENT SUMMARY .....	i
INTRODUCTION.....	5
1.1    STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT.....	6
METHODS .....	7
2.1    LITERATURE SEARCH .....	7
2.2    FIELD SURVEY .....	8
HISTORIC CONTEXT .....	9
3.1    MINNESOTA’S COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETIES, 1920S-EARLY 1980S.....	9
3.2    THE CHARLES A. WEYERHAEUSER MEMORIAL MUSEUM.....	13
EVALUATION.....	21
4.1    DESCRIPTION.....	21
4.2    SIGNIFICANCE .....	52
4.3    INTEGRITY .....	55
4.4    RECOMMENDATION.....	57
REFERENCES CITED.....	58

## FIGURES

Figure 1. Location of property (in yellow).....	5
Figure 2. Former Benton County Historical Society building, 1980 construction at forefront, 2023 .....	12
Figure 3. Olmsted County Historical Society building (constructed circa 1972), 2023 .....	12
Figure 4. Otter Tail County Historical Society building (constructed 1973), 2017 .....	13
Figure 5. Aerial view of the Weyerhaeuser Museum, circa 1975, looking east .....	17
Figure 6. Referenced sections of the Weyerhaeuser Museum with years of completion .....	21
Figure 7. Section A, north elevation, 2023, looking south .....	22
Figure 8. Weyerhaeuser Museum, 2023, looking southeast.....	23
Figure 9. Weyerhaeuser Museum, west elevation, 2023, looking south-southeast .....	23
Figure 10. Section C, east elevation, looking south-southwest.....	24
Figure 11. Detail at front entrance, 2023, looking southwest.....	25
Figure 12. Weyerhaeuser Museum, west elevation, 2023, looking northeast .....	25
Figure 13. Stairwell at base of west elevation of Section E, 2023, looking south.....	26
Figure 14. Weyerhaeuser Museum, 2023, looking northwest.....	27
Figure 15. View toward rear courtyard from gazebo, looking north.....	28
Figure 16. Detail of courtyard-facing elevation, courtyard surfacing, and fountain, 2023, looking north.....	28
Figure 17. Planters at south end of courtyard, 2023, looking east .....	30
Figure 18. View of boardwalk, gazebo, and fence, 2023, looking southeast.....	30
Figure 19. Gazebo, 2023, looking south.....	31
Figure 20. View toward parking area and north portion of property, 2023, looking north .....	32
Figure 21. Weyerhaeuser Museum, current floor plan .....	33
Figure 22. View from inside main entrance, 2023, looking south .....	34
Figure 23. View from south end of west exhibit hall, 2023, looking south.....	34

Figure 24. Detail of bulkhead in west exhibit hall, 2023, looking east .....	35
Figure 25. West exhibit hall, 2023, looking south.....	36
Figure 26. Detail of pilasters in west exhibit hall, 2023 .....	37
Figure 27. Detail of ceiling, west exhibit hall, 2023 .....	38
Figure 28. Z. N. Barnes display room, 2023, looking south-southwest.....	38
Figure 29. J. C. Patience display room, 2023, looking north-northwest.....	39
Figure 30. Work room, 2023, looking northwest.....	40
Figure 31. Main-floor storage room, 2023, looking northeast.....	40
Figure 32. Basement storage room, 2023, looking northeast.....	41
Figure 33. Archive room, 2023, looking south.....	42
Figure 34. Gordon Rosenmeier research room, 2023, looking south .....	43
Figure 35. Gordon Rosenmeier research room, fireplace wall detail, 2023, looking south .....	43
Figure 36. Kitchenette, 2023, looking north .....	44
Figure 37. Director's office, 2023, looking northwest .....	45
Figure 38. R. D. Musser library, fireplace, 2023, looking northwest.....	46
Figure 39. R. D. Musser library, south wall, 2023, looking southwest .....	47
Figure 40. R. D. Musser Library, west wall, 2023, looking west.....	48
Figure 41. View of restroom entrances, 2023, looking east-northeast.....	49
Figure 42. Office and gift shop, 2023, looking northeast.....	50
Figure 43. Office storage room, 2023, looking south .....	51
Figure 44. Houston County Historical Society building (1969 construction at forefront), 2023...	53
Figure 45. Former Beltrami County Historical Society building (constructed 1963), 2022 .....	53

# INTRODUCTION

The Morrison County Historical Society (MCHS) received a Minnesota Historical and Cultural Heritage Grant for a qualified historian to complete an evaluation of the Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum (Weyerhaeuser Museum) (MI-PIK-00024), located at 2151 Lindbergh Drive South in the city of Little Falls (Figure 1), to determine its eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). The MCHS contracted with Deco Cultural Services LLC (Deco) to conduct the evaluation, which was carried out in November of 2023 to March of 2024.



**FIGURE 1. LOCATION OF PROPERTY (IN YELLOW)**

## 1.1 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The next chapter describes the methods used in the investigation and is followed by a chapter that provides detailed historic contexts for the property. The subsequent chapter provides an evaluation of the National Register eligibility of the property, examining the significance of the property within the framework of the historic contexts and its integrity based on the results of the field survey.



## METHODS

The objective of the architectural history evaluation was to determine whether the Weyerhaeuser Museum is eligible for listing in the National Register. National Register eligibility is based in part on the four significance criteria outlined below:

- Criterion A – association with events or patterns that have made a significant contribution in our past;
- Criterion B – association with the lives of persons significant in our past;
- Criterion C – embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction; or representation of the work of a master; possession of high artistic values; or representation of a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; and
- Criterion D – potential to yield information important to prehistory or history (National Park Service 2002)

Additionally, properties less than 50 years in age are subject to Criteria Consideration G, under which properties significant under one of the four criteria may only be eligible for listing in the National Register if they are of exceptional importance.

Eligibility additionally requires that the property have the ability to convey its significance based on seven aspects of integrity identified by the National Park Service (2002): location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

All work was conducted per the *Guidelines for History/Architecture Projects in Minnesota*, (Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office [SHPO] 2017), and *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation* (National Park Service 1983).

### 2.1 LITERATURE SEARCH

The MCHS provided Deco with access to materials contained in its archives, including building committee meeting notes, correspondence with the architect, newspaper articles, historical photographs, and blueprints for the building as originally constructed as well as for additions. A search of *Northwest Architect*, and reviews of historical American Institute of Architects directories, *Minnesota Architects: A Biographical Dictionary* (Lathrop 2010), and other online and published secondary sources were carried out to obtain relevant information on the architect and their works.

## 2.2 FIELD SURVEY

Intensive survey of the Weyerhaeuser Museum was performed on November 8, 2023. Andrea Pizza served as Principal Investigator and conducted the fieldwork. The exterior and the interior were examined and documented in detail to generate accurate descriptions and to evaluate the ability of the property to convey any potential historical significance, based on the seven aspects of integrity as defined by the National Park Service (2002): location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Documentation consisted of field notes and digital photography.

## HISTORIC CONTEXT

The Weyerhaeuser Museum, completed in 1975 and expanded in 1981, post-dates all SHPO statewide contexts, and it is not associated with any of the statewide thematic contexts or property type documentations. The historic contexts that follow were used to assist in the evaluation of the museum by providing a detailed framework for assessing its historical significance.

### 3.1 MINNESOTA'S COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETIES, 1920S-EARLY 1980S

Minnesota's county history movement began to coalesce in the 1920s, particularly after the Minnesota Historical Society's 1922 conference on local history work in the state. The conference was not a meeting of formal local historical organizations, as few existed at the time, but rather a reflection of a burgeoning interest in preserving local history. It did, however, motivate the creation of formal organizations, providing both inspiration and direction for local historical activity, including a constitution which could be used in the organization of a county historical society to be affiliated with the Minnesota Historical Society. The constitution established the objectives for such a society as the discovery, collection, preservation, and accessibility of materials that could "help to establish or illustrate the history of the county or the state," as well as to disseminate and cultivate interest in historical information through various avenues of reaching the public. In the same year that the conference was held, St. Louis County formed the first of Minnesota's county historical societies. By 1930, Minnesota could claim 16 county historical societies. To these were added, by 1940, another 39. As of 1949, all 87 counties in the state had this type of institution (*Minnesota History Bulletin* 1922; Blegen 1930:12; Grahn 1955).

The proliferation of the 1930s was facilitated by, among other conditions, a realization that history was being lost to the modernization of cities, made plain by obvious and relatively rapid architectural and demographic changes; growth in automobile ownership and tourism, with an accompanying demand for history-minded destinations; 1929 state legislation authorizing county boards to appropriate funds to county historical societies affiliated with the Minnesota Historical Society and authorizing select public entities to provide select public spaces for county historical society use; and federal relief programs (Minnesota Statute Chapter 324, S.F. No. 467; *The St. Cloud Daily Times* 1941; Lawrence 2003). After World War II, more encouragement came from the renewed patriotism fomented by the war, which furthered public interest in historical sites; a more collective awareness of Minnesota history as various organizations and publications recognized the territorial centennial through public events and writings in 1949; and 1953 state legislation allowing for a portion of county tax revenue to be allotted to county historical societies (*The St. Cloud Daily Times* 1956; *Minneapolis Tribune* 1966; Pizza 2020:14, 24-25, 34).

Even with such encouragement, 17 county historical societies had suspended activity before 1956; but by 1966, seven of these 17 had rebounded. During the same ten-year period, the annual budget of the Minnesota Historical Society rose from \$220,000 to \$1.2 million, and at the end of it, the National Historic Preservation Act was passed. An intensifying collective public interest in all levels of American history, then, was manifest through organizational, financial, and legal conduits. In a 1966 *Minneapolis Tribune* feature, the then-director of the Minnesota Historical Society, Russ Fridley, attributed Minnesota's growing interest in its history to seven factors: 1) the 1958 recognition of the state centennial; 2) new museum-exhibit practices focusing on interpretation for visitors over quantitative presentation; 3) continued demand created by automobile tourism for accessible historic sites; 4) a sense of nostalgia in reaction to the homogenization of U.S. cities in the modern era; 5) an increase in quality publications covering various aspects of Minnesota history; 6) promotion of historical sites and museums by local chambers of commerce; and 7) state governmental interest in history for its importance as an economic asset at the state and local levels (*The St. Cloud Daily Times* 1956; Larson 1966).

The concerted efforts to promote and accommodate public interest in local history continued to pay off in the amassing of both visitors to historical attractions and donations of materials to historical societies through the rest of the 1960s and beyond. Yearly attendance at the Hennepin County Historical Museum, for example, rose from approximately 16,000 in 1964 to nearly 23,000 five years later. The Gibbs Farm historical site in Ramsey County witnessed a far greater increase in annual attendance during the 1960s, from approximately 5,500 near the beginning of the decade to approximately 30,000 at the end (Gillespie 1971). These types of numbers led David Nystuen, Field Services Coordinator for the Minnesota Historical Society, to characterize preservation as "a big craze" (Knudtson 1973) at a Winona County Historical Society meeting in 1973.

The "craze," however, found numerous counties unprepared, as demonstrated by Otter Tail County. In 1968, the Otter Tail County Historical Society's museum was a popular tourist attraction, with visitors from 27 states numbering over 1,800 in each of its five peak months. Near the end of the year, the editors of the Fergus Falls Daily Journal (Grary, Serkland, and Underwood 1968), citing the cramped conditions of the museum, lamented that "groups promoting tourism don't seem to recognize the growing interest in history," and that "it is almost impossible to comprehend the significance of the [displays] because of the way they are crowded," noting, "visitors have to get down on their knees to see parts of the collection." The historical society had lost opportunities to bolster its collections, as the inadequacy of its facility had forced it to turn down donations, and likely visitors, as the editors noted, "How many more visitors there would have been [in 1968] if the museum was really something to brag about is pure speculation." In Otter Tail County, as in many others, such inadequacy spurred favorable local sentiment, effort,

and financial support for a dedicated museum facility. The success of these facilities is further illustrated by the example, with the Otter Tail County Historical Society museum registering 22,000 registered visitors and a peak monthly attendance of over 3,000 in the year following its 1973 opening (*Fergus Falls Daily Journal* 1974).

In 1960, a wave of purpose-built construction for county history museums began in Minnesota, and then it continued for more than two decades. A cursory review suggests that before that year, the vast majority of county historical society museums were housed either in spaces in public buildings, such as courthouses and city halls, or in repurposed buildings, typically of at least local historical importance, the latter of which continues to be the majority at present. Beginning in 1960, however, at least 21, and likely a few more<sup>1</sup> county historical societies obtained new buildings, with Grant County Historical Society being the first in 1960 and Stearns County closing out the wave in 1983. These buildings did not follow a particular architectural formula. They ranged from small, utilitarian buildings, such as the 28-by-44-foot, concrete-block building of the Benton County Historical Society, to more expansive, architect-designed buildings, such as the organic building of the Olmsted County Historical Society (Weichselbaum and Associates, ca. 1972) (Figures 2 and 3). They might embrace the landscape, as was the case for the latter, or might stand out from it in a decidedly Modern statement, as with the precast-concrete building of the Otter Tail County Historical Society (Foss, Engelstad and Foss, 1973) (Figure 4). It was during this wave that the Morrison County Historical Society's Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum was conceived and constructed.

---

<sup>1</sup> A few historical societies do not include information on the construction dates of their facilities in their website content nor could the year of construction be sufficiently narrowed through online searchable newspapers, historical aerial photography, or professional judgment.



Google Street View

**FIGURE 2. FORMER BENTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY BUILDING, 1980 CONSTRUCTION AT FOREFRONT, 2023**



Google Street View

**FIGURE 3. OLMSTED COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY BUILDING (CONSTRUCTED CIRCA 1972), 2023**





Wikipedia

**FIGURE 4. OTTER TAIL COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY BUILDING (CONSTRUCTED 1973), 2017**

### 3.2 THE CHARLES A. WEYERHAEUSER MEMORIAL MUSEUM (MI-PIK-00024)

The Morrison County Historical Society (MCHS) was formed in 1936 as an adjunct to the Works Progress Administration's biography project. In addition to recording the biographies of the residents of Morrison County, the MCHS, as an initial goal, sought to obtain information pertaining to the previous 100 years of the county's history. Its formation was met enthusiastically by county residents, so the space in its first assigned headquarters, a basement room in the county courthouse provided in April of 1938, was quickly overwhelmed with donations. The MCHS, however, would be challenged in various ways over the next nearly 25 years, which would keep the obtainment of an adequate, permanent space at bay. These challenges included World War II; a lack of funding; and the passing away of motivated leadership, including president Val Kasperek in 1951 and secretary/treasurer Alex Huddleston in 1958, the latter passing of which left the operations of the MCHS in limbo. In late 1962, the Minnesota Historical Society took up the mantle of MCHS leadership just long enough to jumpstart the organization back into activity.

Within a year, the new board of the MCHS officially committed to the appointment of a building committee and a concerted effort to obtain a purpose-built facility (MCHS n.d.).

In keeping with the trend of increasing interest in history, the courthouse museum saw 820 registered visitors in 1965, 1,170 in 1966, and 1,000 in the first half of 1967, with 389 of those attending in May and additional peak months of the year's tourism season yet to come. The museum was additionally running out of space to accept the material donations that continued to come in. In 1968, an initially planned site for a building was purchased but without funding or a design for a building in place. A building fund was established the following year (*The St. Cloud Daily Times* 1967; Pepin 1967; MCHS n.d.).

In 1970, Sarah-Maud Weyerhaeuser Sivertsen and Carl A. Weyerhaeuser, the children of the Little Falls lumberman Charles A. Weyerhaeuser and his wife, Frances Maud (née Moon), and Sarah-Maud's husband, Robert, anonymously contributed substantial amounts to the building fund. Attached to these monies were the conditions that the building be named for Charles Weyerhaeuser; that the donors and the Minnesota Historical Society approve the building site design; and that the Minnesota Historical Society serve as the fiscal agent and "provide technical assistance on matters of architectural design and exhibit planning."<sup>2</sup> After conflicting opinions within the MCHS over both the site and the building design slowed the building planning process, the site issues were resolved in May of 1972 when a Mississippi River-side location became available and was purchased. Resolution of the building design issues, however, awaited the June of 1973 termination of the contract with the originally hired architect and the hiring of Miller-Dunwiddie Architects, Inc., the following month.

The firm of Miller-Dunwiddie Architects began as Miller, Whitehead and Dunwiddie, which was formed by Foster Dunwiddie, Kenneth Whitehead, and William Miller in 1963. All three graduated with a degree in architecture from the University of Minnesota, Whitehead in 1949, Miller in 1950, and Dunwiddie in 1951. Afterward, they rose through the ranks of Thorshov and Cerny/The Cerny Associates, with at least Dunwiddie and Whitehead to become vice presidents there in 1959. In 1962, when they were still with The Cerny Associates, the *American Architects Directory* listed under both Dunwiddie's and Miller's entries for their principal works the Metropolitan Stadium in Bloomington, the Pearson Candy Company building in St. Paul, and the Minnesota Centennial State Office Building in St. Paul. Their listed works also included projects they had worked on separately, but none were listed for Whitehead, who presumably did not provide any for the

---

<sup>2</sup> Memorandum, Russell W. Fridley, Minnesota Historical Society, to Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Warner, MCHS, March 30, 1970; Letter, Russell W. Fridley to Arthur Warner, September 15, 1970. MCHS subject file, "C. A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum: Potential Properties Pre-1975."



publication. Whitehead left Miller, Whitehead and Dunwiddie in 1966 to work for United Airlines, after which the firm carried on as Miller-Dunwiddie Architects. In the 1970 *American Architects Directory*, Miller's listed principal works were all with Miller-Dunwiddie, including two elderly housing buildings; the east grandstand for the Metropolitan Stadium; the Metropolitan Airports commercial office building in St. Paul, and the United Airlines hangar and cargo building in St. Paul; Dunwiddie did not submit a response for publication. Miller passed away in 1993, and Dunwiddie retired in 1997 before passing away in 2022, but the firm continues to exist into the present (Koyl 1962:756; Gane and Koyl 1970:626; *Star Tribune* 1993; Lathrop 2010:64, 160; University of Minnesota, Northwest Architectural Archives n.d.).

Miller-Dunwiddie was selected by the MCHS from a pool of eight architects on the basis of the firm's interest in combining "history and tradition with contemporary forms"<sup>3</sup> and their ability to demonstrate intentionality of form through their designs for the United Airlines hangar and cargo building and the branch offices of the Midwest Federal Savings and Loan. Foster Dunwiddie specifically was engaged to design the building.

Upon selection, Dunwiddie was presented with the "Program of the Morrison County Historical Society" (Program), which provided some historical context as well as specific guidelines and requirements for the museum design. The context identified the importance of particularly the Mississippi River, but also sawmilling, farming, and early industries, such as the Little Falls Iron Works, brick manufacturing, and granite quarrying. On those bases, the MCHS noted that the "river MUST figure into the overall plan" and suggested the incorporation of logs, rough-sawn lumber, stone/black granite, and yellow brick into the building materials, as well as "hardware and other fixtures . . . in keeping with the area." The suggestion was also made for a fireplace as "a focal point . . . not situated where displays detract from it" (MCHS 1973).

Guidelines within the program suggested an emphasis on the Mississippi River, potentially with an observation area; accentuating the strength and warmth of wood; split stone accents; a landscaped parking area; two levels or a basement; allowance for expansion; security measures; exterior night lighting; an "exciting" entrance to the building; minimum barriers to the disabled; consideration of unidirectional circulation; and consideration of energy conservation measures. Listed requirements included a fireplace; interior and exterior benches; a drinking fountain; maintenance storage and sink; electrical outlets sufficient in number and position to allow for flexibility of displays; carpet; climate controls; concealed electrical equipment; a telephone; waste

---

<sup>3</sup> Letter, MCHS to Foster Dunwiddie, July 5, 1973. MCHS subject files, "Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum, 1973-1988, Miller-Dunwiddie, Inc., Architects."

containers; and a dedication plaque (MCHS 1973). Additionally identified were rooms/functions that should be included, as well as specific requirements for each.

Completed working drawings and specifications for the Weyerhaeuser Museum were presented to the MCHS building design committee for review and bids solicited for the construction project in November of 1973.<sup>4</sup> The Loeffel-Engstrand Company, based in Hopkins, was selected as the general contractor; the St. Cloud-based McDowall Company as the mechanical contractor; and the Glenwood-based Commercial Mechanical Services as the electrical contractor.

Execution of the contracts, however, awaited formal agreement by the MCHS to two conditions instituted by Sarah-Maud and Robert Sivertsen, who by then had committed to fund the entire building project. The first was still the naming of the building for Sarah-Maud's father but with the more specific "Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum." The second was that the site of the museum not be used for reconstruction of a pioneer village or the placement of individual "frontier structures."<sup>5</sup> The conditions were accepted, and the contracts were reviewed by Russell Fridley and Gordon Rosenmeier, director and board member, respectively, of the Minnesota Historical Society, then approved by the MCHS board of directors in January of 1974.<sup>6</sup> The financial gift allowed for the adoption of materials that had been included in the design as alternates, including black slate and hardwood in lieu of vinyl asbestos tile for flooring in various rooms. Construction of the building began in February of 1974 and was substantially complete one year later (Figure 5). A dedication ceremony was held on August 24, 1975.

The museum building designed by Dunwiddie was identified in a brochure issued along with the dedication program (brochure) as "representative of the Greek Revival period, a style that was popular among the early [read: Euroamerican] settlers of the County," citing the "use of partial return cornices . . . on the gable ends, colonnaded entrance porticoes, [and] wide vertical boards at the building corners."<sup>7</sup> To these should be added, also typical of the Greek Revival style, the building's 6/6, double-hung sash windows. The building evokes a vernacular approach to the style through its squared, simplified-Doric columns (McAlester 2015:250, 253).

---

<sup>4</sup> Memorandum, Foster W. Dunwiddie, November 15, 1973. MCHS subject files, "Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum, 1973-1988, Miller-Dunwiddie, Inc., Architects."

<sup>5</sup> Letter, Russell W. Fridley to Arthur Warner, January 22, 1974. MCHS subject file, "C. A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum: Potential Properties Pre-1975."

<sup>6</sup> Memorandum, Foster W. Dunwiddie, January 29, 1974. MCHS subject files, "Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum, 1973-1988, Miller-Dunwiddie, Inc., Architects."

<sup>7</sup> Brochure titled "The Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum," 1975. MCHS subject files, "C. A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum: Potential Properties Pre-1975."



Provided by MCHS

**FIGURE 5. AERIAL VIEW OF THE WEYERHAEUSER MUSEUM, CIRCA 1975, LOOKING EAST**

It is important to note, however, that the design was not so much about Greek Revival, i.e., intended to be a faithful stylistic statement, as it was about Greek Revival vis a vis the history of Morrison County. With county history as the architectural premise, other details appearing in nineteenth-century Morrison County buildings generally and not just those in the Greek Revival style were incorporated into the design and highlighted in the brochure, including its interior and exterior operating wood shutters, paneled wood doors, wood-shingled roof, narrow clapboard siding, and yellow-brick chimneys, the latter with beaded mortar joints and corbelled caps.

Wood and brick were two of the main material selections for the building, which is unsurprising given the prevalence of their use throughout Minnesota as Euroamericans began to occupy various parts of the state. Still, these materials strongly reflected two of the county's historically important major industries, sawmilling and brick manufacturing. The former was associated with

Charles Weyerhaeuser, which was undoubtedly a reason for having wood as the primary material used in both the interior and exterior of the building, although the brochure attributed it to wood having been “the most prevalent construction material used in Morrison County.” While the exterior wood siding was painted, the color was “carefully selected to give the appearance of weathered wood.” The yellow color of the brick, used also for the two focal fireplaces in the building interior, is due to the nature of the county’s former plentiful clay deposits. The brick in the museum was produced by one of the county’s major manufacturers, the Duclos Brick Factory. It was salvaged from St. Adalbert’s Church, which had been constructed in Little Falls in 1900.<sup>8</sup> A third material prominent in the completed building was black slate. Used for the corridor flooring and fireplace hearths, it spoke to slate outcroppings that historically spanned the Mississippi River at various points, most notably Little Falls and Pike’s Rapids, creating conditions conducive to water power.

Dunwiddie’s design for the Weyerhaeuser Museum, however, was not concerned with conveying the county’s history through only inward-looking aspects. The building was sited and glass liberally used to maintain views of the Mississippi River from all corridors and, particularly, from the front entrance, from which a “dramatic view looking down river [was] afforded the visitor entering the Museum . . . [who was] thus reminded of the importance of this major traffic artery in the history of the development of the County.” Landscaping included plantings native to Morrison County, the majority of which were installed in an informal manner in keeping with the historical period and vernacular style of the building. The landscaping plan called for trees and shrubs including black chokeberry, smooth sumac, Manchu cherry, bull pine, green ash, ironwood, American linden, quaking aspen, sugar maple, common hackberry, and common chokecherry. These were placed primarily along the west boundary of the property, screening out the road. Small numbers of some of these species were placed in the parking islands, and four chokecherry shrubs were to be placed in one of two small beds at the south end of the south courtyard, with the other bed to contain an herb garden; however, the four shrubs were abandoned in favor of two herb gardens. To these plantings would be added prairie restoration areas at the site in 1977 and 1978. Employing various grasses and wildflowers, these were intended to be both attractive and educational to museum visitors. These areas were located variously around the museum

---

<sup>8</sup> The MCHS website indicates the brick was salvaged from St. Adalbert’s (<https://morrisoncountyhistory.org/?p=5107>), but a primary document confirming the source of the brick could not be located in the MCHS subject files. The information contained in the website, however, is supported by an online article pertaining to St. Adalbert’s Cemetery, which notes that the church “burned down in the 1970s” (Lehrke 2017); by information on the December, 1971 demolition of the church contained in the MCHS archives (Mike Worcester, Executive Director, MCHS, personal communication 2024); and a 1975 aerial photograph, which shows the church to be no longer present.



building and parking lot, but prairie plantings were additionally added to the herb gardens, and specifically smoke grass around the base of the fountain (see below).<sup>9</sup>

In addition to planted materials, the 1975 landscaping surrounded the front and rear courtyards with crushed granite native to Morrison County, which was historically quarried for use in building foundations. The courtyards were originally intended for exhibiting objects, presumably resistant to the elements, which were too large to fit into the building; however, as of the spring of 1981, when Foster Dunwiddie and his associate, John Low, reviewed the execution to date of the interpretive plan and proposed use of museum facilities as developed in 1974-1975, the courtyards had not been used for this purpose. A cast-iron fountain had been installed in the south courtyard in either 1977 or 1978, and in 1980, two of the four doors leading out to the rear (south) courtyard were removed and replaced with window arrangements matching those present to the exterior sides of the doors. In addition to not being used for exhibits, the concrete surface of the south courtyard caused a heavy glare from the sun to reflect into the building (Miller Dunwiddie Architects 1981:4). Dunwiddie and Low suggested the removal of some of the concrete and installation of plantings or trees in the south courtyard, noting "Trees with tall trunks and fine leaves (such as locusts) would effectively reduce the glare while continuing to afford good visibility of the river downstream from the site" (Miller Dunwiddie Architects, Inc. 1981:5).

Beyond exterior issues, Dunwiddie and Low noted that shortages of interior space for various functions, but particularly for collections and manuscripts storage, had already become problematic. The original design of the building had anticipated the need for eventual expansion, which was planned to be an addition south off the east wing of the building, and the review identified the potential for placement of a second addition off the north end of the west wing of the building. The Sivertsens once again exhibited their generosity and shouldered the cost of expansion, allowing the MCHS to proceed with both additions, with the design supervised by Foster Dunwiddie. The general contract for construction was awarded to the Victoria-based firm Building Constructors, Inc. Construction began in August of 1981, and was substantially complete by the following June.<sup>10</sup> Along with the expansion, some of the concrete slabs were removed from around the fountain in the south courtyard at this time, and trees were planted within the resulting voids.

---

<sup>9</sup> Prairie Restorations, Inc., "Working Guidelines For Prairie Landscaping at the Morrison County Historical Center," September 22, 1977. MCHS subject files, "Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum, 1973-1988, Miller-Dunwiddie, Inc., Architects."

<sup>10</sup> Letter, Foster Dunwiddie to Jane Juhnke, Minnesota Historical Society, July 17, 1981; Architects." Letter, Foster Dunwiddie to Building Constructors, Inc., August 17, 1981; Memorandum – Field Observation, Peter Seyfarth, August 31, 1981; Memorandum, Foster Dunwiddie, July 2, 1982. MCHS subject files, "Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum, 1973-1988, Miller-Dunwiddie, Inc., Architects."

In January of 1982, Miller Dunwiddie developed a plan for a proposed observation deck and other, minor modifications for the Weyerhaeuser Museum site. The observation deck structure was to comprise a wood bridge extending south from the south courtyard and terminating at a wood platform holding interpretive signs and overlooking the Mississippi River. The other modifications consisted of constructing a short trail from the Weyerhaeuser Museum parking lot north to a Charles A. Lindbergh State Park trail connection at the property boundary, connecting some segments of the split-rail fence, and installing a few new interpretive signs at both courtyards.<sup>11</sup> Sometime between the preparation of that plan and July of 1983, it was decided that a gazebo would be placed at the end of the bridge instead of a platform.<sup>12</sup> Footings for the gazebo, also designed by Miller Dunwiddie, were installed in late 1983 by the contractor, the W. Gohman Construction Company. The superstructure was constructed in the company's shop in St. Joseph over the winter, then set on the footings via crane in the spring of 1984.<sup>13</sup> The gazebo constitutes the last major construction to have occurred on the property.

---

<sup>11</sup> Plan titled "Proposed Observation Deck & Site Modifications to C. A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum," January 27, 1982. MCHS subject files, "Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum, 1973-1988, Miller-Dunwiddie, Inc., Architects."

<sup>12</sup> Miller Dunwiddie invoice no. 6711-7 for Consultation, Planning, Preparation of Plans for Gazebo, July 22, 1983. MCHS subject files, "Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum, 1973-1988, Miller-Dunwiddie, Inc., Architects."

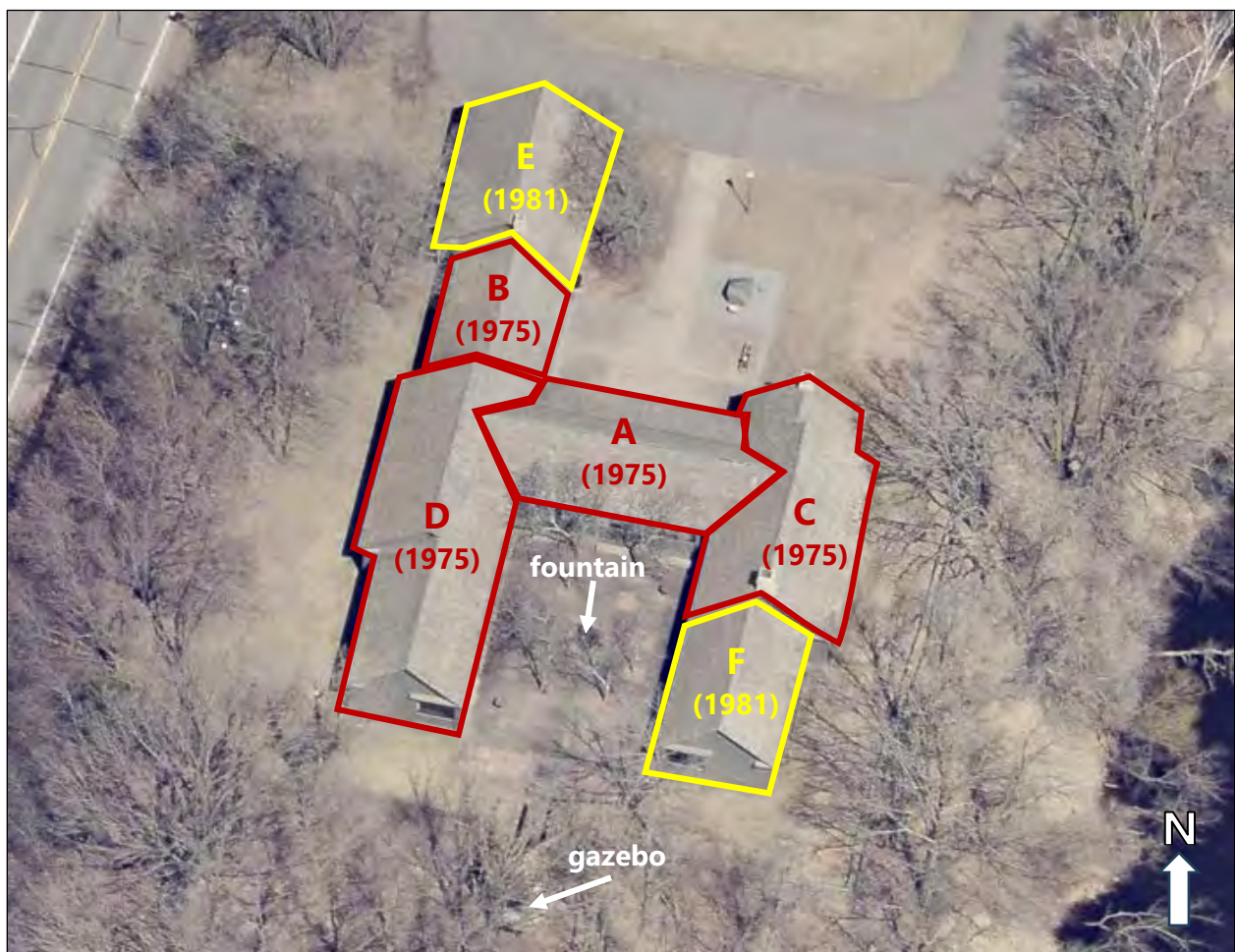
<sup>13</sup> Memorandum, Foster Dunwiddie, November 11, 1983. MCHS subject files, "Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum, 1973-1988, Miller-Dunwiddie, Inc., Architects."

# EVALUATION

## 4.1 DESCRIPTION

### *Exterior*

The Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum is a one-story, Neo-Traditional, cross-gabled building completed in 1975, with one-story additions that were constructed in 1981. The original plan, although irregular, was primarily an H, the west leg of which extended farther north and south than the east leg (see Figure 5). The 1981 additions extended the east leg to the south to make it equivalent on that end to the west leg and extended the west leg still farther to the north. The latter addition is the only part of the building to incorporate a basement. The foundation of the building is concrete block. The exterior walls of the building are clad in wood lap siding painted dark gray, and the roof in replacement wood shakes. For ease of reference, the various sections of the building have been given letter designations here (Figure 6).



**FIGURE 6. REFERENCED SECTIONS OF THE WEYERHAEUSER MUSEUM WITH YEARS OF COMPLETION**

Section A, completed in 1975, is the cross-gabled portion of the building, which constitutes the connecting bar of the H. A shed-roofed, full-width, open porch is at the front of section A (Figure 7). The floor is a low, wood platform. Along its north edge are six symmetrically arranged but irregularly spaced squared wood posts with full-height, recessed panels. The interior two posts visually frame the paneled wood double doors that constitute the main entrance to the building. To the east of these, visually framed by the two easternmost posts, is a 6/6, double-hung wood-sash window with a wood sill and wood lintel, flanked on both sides by operable wood shutters. Shutters, wood sills, and wood lintels are present for all windows of this type and should be assumed below. Fenestration in the rear (south) elevation of section A is described later.

The northwest corner of section A meets the southeast corner of section B, completed in 1975 (Figure 8). The roof height of section B is the same as that of section A. The south half of its east and west elevations are fenestrated with two 6/6, double-hung wood-sash windows (Figure 9). Evenly spaced with and north of those in the west elevation is a paneled wood replacement door.

Section C, completed in 1975, intersects the east end of section A (see Figure 8). It comprises a shallow, narrower north section with a roof of the same height as section A, and a deep, wider south section with a higher roof height, resulting in nested north-facing gables. Both gables, along with all others on the building, have a wood finish and wood cornice returns. Below the



**FIGURE 7. SECTION A, NORTH ELEVATION, 2023, LOOKING SOUTH**





**FIGURE 8. WEYERHAEUSER MUSEUM, 2023, LOOKING SOUTHEAST**



**FIGURE 9. WEYERHAEUSER MUSEUM, WEST ELEVATION, 2023, LOOKING SOUTH-SOUTHEAST**

lower gable, the north face of section C is fenestrated with two symmetrically arranged 6/6, double-hung wood sash windows. Four more of these windows are regularly spaced along the east elevation of the wider south section, the northernmost of which was added in 1988 when a storage room was converted to the director's office (Figure 10). Fenestration in the west elevation of section C south of section A is described later.

The north end of section D, completed in 1975, abuts the south end of section B, and the north end of its east elevation abuts the west end of section A. This end contains a paneled wood replacement door, which faces onto the porch at the front of section A (Figure 11). The roof height of the north half of section D is higher and the roof height of its south half is equivalent to that of section B (Figure 12). The north half of section D is wider than the south half. The west elevation of the wider south half contains three regularly spaced 6/6, double-hung wood-sash windows. Fenestration in the south elevation and the east elevation of section D south of section A is described later.

Section E, completed in 1981, is an addition off the north end of section B, relative to which it is wider and has a higher roof height (see Figures 8 and 9). A paneled wood door is located in its south elevation where it extends west of section B. Its west elevation is fenestrated with three regularly spaced 6/6, double-hung wood-sash windows. At the base of this elevation is a below-



**FIGURE 10. SECTION C, EAST ELEVATION, LOOKING SOUTH-SOUTHWEST**





**FIGURE 11. DETAIL AT FRONT ENTRANCE, 2023, LOOKING SOUTHWEST**



**FIGURE 12. WEYERHAEUSER MUSEUM, WEST ELEVATION, 2023, LOOKING NORTHEAST**

ground stairwell, with concrete-block walls and concrete stairs (Figure 13). At the base of the stairwell, a paneled wood door is located in the west-facing elevation for access to the basement. A basic, open wood railing runs around the top of the exterior stairwell walls, incorporating a gate on the north side.

Section F, completed in 1981, is an addition off the south end of section C, relative to which it is narrower and has a lesser roof height (Figure 14). Fenestration in the west and south elevations is described below.



**FIGURE 13. STAIRWELL AT BASE OF WEST ELEVATION OF SECTION E, 2023, LOOKING SOUTH**





**FIGURE 14. WEYERHAEUSER MUSEUM, 2023, LOOKING NORTHWEST**

The south elevation of section A and to its south, the east elevation of section D and the west elevations of sections C and F form a U around a rear courtyard (Figure 15). Within these elevations are series of pilasters with full-height, recessed panels, mimicking the posts at the porch of section A. Spacing of the pilasters alternates so that every other bay is twice as wide (Figure 16). Between each set of pilasters is an insulated plate-glass window over a bulkhead faced in painted paneled wood. In the south end of each of the courtyard-facing elevations of sections D and F are paneled wood replacement doors. In the south elevations of these sections, the end closest to the courtyard is fenestrated with a single insulated plate-glass window over a bulkhead faced in painted paneled wood. The cornice returns of their corresponding gables are extended to a point equivalent to the width of the window (see Figures 12 and 14).

Three similarly constructed brick chimney stacks extend above various peaks of the roof of the building, one at the north end of section B, one at the north end of section C, and one at the south end of section C (see, e.g., Figure 10). Each is constructed of salvaged yellow brick laid in a stretcher-bond pattern. Each stack is wider at the base than the portion immediately above and incorporates corbelled brick courses, the outermost of which projects equivalent to the base width, near the top.





**FIGURE 15. VIEW TOWARD REAR COURTYARD FROM GAZEBO, LOOKING NORTH**



**FIGURE 16. DETAIL OF COURTYARD-FACING ELEVATION, COURTYARD SURFACING, AND FOUNTAIN, 2023, LOOKING NORTH**

The surface of the courtyard consists of concrete panels with exposed aggregate (see Figure 16). In the center, an embedded circular planter of the same material encircles a large, tiered cast-iron fountain, installed in either 1977 or 1978. Surrounding the planter, a symmetrical arrangement of ten individual concrete panels were removed in 1981 to accommodate the planting of trees; seven trees remain in place. The courtyard remains surrounded by a border of crushed granite.

A short sidewalk of concrete panels with exposed aggregate extends south from the courtyard, meeting up with a boardwalk that leads south to a gazebo constructed in 1983-1984 (see Figure 15). Adjacent to the south edge of the courtyard and adjacent to each side of the sidewalk is a rectangular planting area (Figure 17). Each planting area includes a low, raised bed with a wood-plank border that meets the sidewalk on its respective side, surrounded by a U-shaped, rock-filled area bordered on the side opposite the sidewalk and on the south by a wood-plank border that is flush with the ground surface.

The majority of the boardwalk is flanked on both sides by a wood railing with sawn balusters which extends to and continues around the exterior of the gazebo (Figure 18). The gazebo is octagonal in plan, and its conical roof is supported by a wood post-and-beam system reinforced with knee braces (Figure 19). The posts, integrated into the railing, are octagonal. Midway between each set of posts, a short vertical member with a finial at the bottom extends down from the beam. It is mimicked in a slightly longer, vertically split fashion abutting opposing sides of each post, and the knee braces extend between the shorter ones at the beam diagonally down to the lower portion of the closest longer ones. Additional finials are suspended from the eaves, flanking each corner. The ceiling and floor of the gazebo are wood tongue-and-groove, and the roof is clad in wood shakes. A metal finial is present at the roof peak.

A second courtyard is located on the north side of the building, in front of section A (see Figures 7 and 11). It is also surfaced in concrete panels with exposed aggregate and is surrounded by a border of crushed granite. At its north end, a few feet in front of the porch are two simple benches. Between them and in line with the entrance is a wood ramp. A sidewalk of concrete panels with exposed aggregate extends north from the courtyard to the driveway system associated with the parking area (Figure 20). On the east side of the sidewalk is a bed of crushed granite containing a large granite boulder from a county quarry and two mill stones. On the west side is a bed containing planted shrubs.

Wood split-rail fencing is present along the east side of the driveway that extends from Lindbergh Drive south to the parking lot; within the grass-surfaced islands to the exterior of each of the parking rows; and along the top of the slope down to the Mississippi River on the east and south sides of the property, interrupted on the latter side by the gazebo (see Figure 18).





**FIGURE 17. PLANTERS AT SOUTH END OF COURTYARD, 2023, LOOKING EAST**



**FIGURE 18. VIEW OF BOARDWALK, GAZEBO, AND FENCE, 2023, LOOKING SOUTHEAST**





**FIGURE 19. GAZEBO, 2023, LOOKING SOUTH**



**FIGURE 20. VIEW TOWARD PARKING AREA AND NORTH PORTION OF PROPERTY, 2023, LOOKING NORTH**

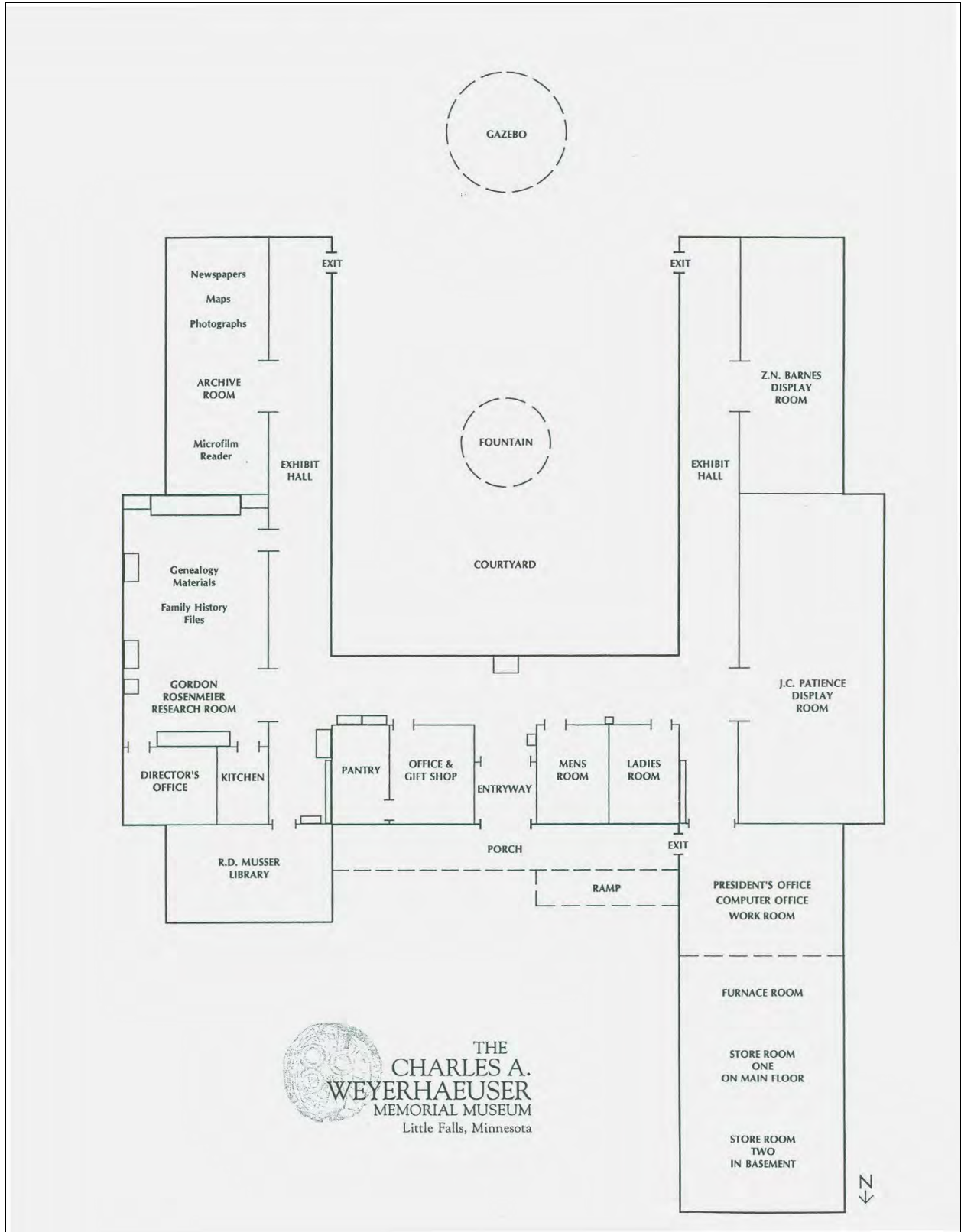
### *Interior*

A current interior plan is provided in Figure 21.

Through the main entrance is a short entry hall with gypsum board walls, at the south end of which are paneled wood double doors, presumably to contain the cold from the main entrance during winter months. The entry hall floor, like that of all hallways within the building, is slate tile (Figure 22).

The hall continues south for a short distance after the double doors to connect to the center of the only east-to-west hall in the building. From each end of the east-to-west hall, another hall leads south to the south end of the building, where a large plate-glass window with a bulkhead faced in diagonally oriented wood tongue-and-groove provides a view out toward the Mississippi River (Figure 23), and leads north to the R. D. Musser library (east hall) and to a work room (west hall).

The south wall of the east-to-west hall, the west wall of the east hall, and the east wall of the west hall face onto the courtyard, and therefore their upper portions are occupied by the insulated plate glass windows. The bulkheads below are faced in diagonally oriented wood tongue-and-



**FIGURE 21. WEYERHAEUSER MUSEUM, CURRENT FLOOR PLAN**





**FIGURE 22. VIEW FROM INSIDE MAIN ENTRANCE, 2023, LOOKING SOUTH**



**FIGURE 23. VIEW FROM SOUTH END OF WEST EXHIBIT HALL, 2023, LOOKING SOUTH**

groove (Figure 24). As on the exterior, the window bays are divided by pilasters with full-height, recessed panels, which extend up to wood top plates (Figures 25 and 26).

The pilasters and the top plates are mirrored on the opposite walls of the east and west halls; these walls are faced in gypsum board (see Figure 25). Heavy rough-sawn wood crossbeams extend between the top plates at the pilasters and underline the acoustic-tile ceilings in both hallways (Figure 27).

Two exhibit rooms are located on the west side of the west hall, the entrances to which have paneled wood doors (section D), as do all entrances along the east hall. The south exhibit room is the Z. N. Barnes display room, and the north exhibit room is the J. C. Patience display room (Figures 28 and 29). Both have hardwood floors, gypsum board walls with wood crown molding and baseboards, acoustic tile ceilings with recessed lights, and perimeter track lighting. Display furniture includes floor cases, as well as full-height display panels framed in wood to match the molding. Three windows are in the west wall of the J. C. Patience display room. The Z. N. Barnes display room is windowless.

North past the east-to-west hall, the west hall extends north to double doors leading to the work room (Section B), and the rooms accessed through it, including the furnace room (Section B), and



**FIGURE 24. DETAIL OF BULKHEAD IN WEST EXHIBIT HALL, 2023, LOOKING EAST**



**FIGURE 25. WEST EXHIBIT HALL, 2023, LOOKING SOUTH**





**FIGURE 26. DETAIL OF PILASTERS IN WEST EXHIBIT HALL, 2023**



**FIGURE 27. DETAIL OF CEILING, WEST EXHIBIT HALL, 2023**



**FIGURE 28. Z. N. BARNES DISPLAY ROOM, 2023, LOOKING SOUTH-SOUTHWEST**





**FIGURE 29. J. C. PATIENCE DISPLAY ROOM, 2023, LOOKING NORTH-NORTHWEST**

two storage rooms (Section E) (Figures 30 through 32). One of the storage rooms occupies the sole basement section of the building. All of these rooms have concrete floors. The walls and ceilings of the main-floor rooms are gypsum board. The wood replacement door near the south end of the east wall of the work room is the one at the west end of the front porch. An industrial metal door in the east end of its north wall leads to the furnace room. A second industrial metal door, near the center of the north wall of the furnace room, leads to the main-floor storage room. A recess in the southwest corner of the main-floor storage room contains two doors. One, in the south wall of the recess, is a paneled wood exterior door. The other, in the north wall of the recess, is an industrial metal door that provides access to the stairwell for the basement.

The stairwell walls are gypsum board above ground level and concrete block below. The stairs are concrete and flanked on both sides by metal pipe hand rails. At the base of the stairwell, a paneled wood door in the east wall provides access to the basement storage room. The basement storage room incorporates a combination of exposed concrete-block and gypsum-board walls, and the ceiling is formed of precast-concrete panels.

Off the east side of the east hall are the archive room, the Gordon Rosenmeier research room, the director's office, and a kitchenette. The archive room is the northern of these, to which a single



**FIGURE 30. WORK ROOM, 2023, LOOKING NORTHWEST**



**FIGURE 31. MAIN-FLOOR STORAGE ROOM, 2023, LOOKING NORTHEAST**





**FIGURE 32. BASEMENT STORAGE ROOM, 2023, LOOKING NORTHEAST**

entrance provides access. Housed within a 1981 addition (section F), plans indicate it was intended to serve this purpose, labeling it as the “manuscript room.” Its materials, however, are the same as are present in the west exhibit halls, perhaps suggesting a desire for flexibility should exhibit space ever be at a premium (Figure 33). A rolling archival storage shelving system was installed here and occupies nearly the full width of the room.

Two entrances to the Gordon Rosenmeier research room, which is south of the archive room, are present off the east side of the east hall, the north one with a single door and the south one with a double door (section C). The focal point of the research room is a full-height brick fireplace with a heavy wood mantel which forms the central majority of the south wall (Figures 34 and 35). It is flanked on both sides by wood built-in bookshelves, open in the upper majority and with cabinet doors below. The yellow-colored brick is laid in a common-bond pattern. The remaining walls are treated in the same manner as those in the exhibit rooms, as are the floor and ceiling.

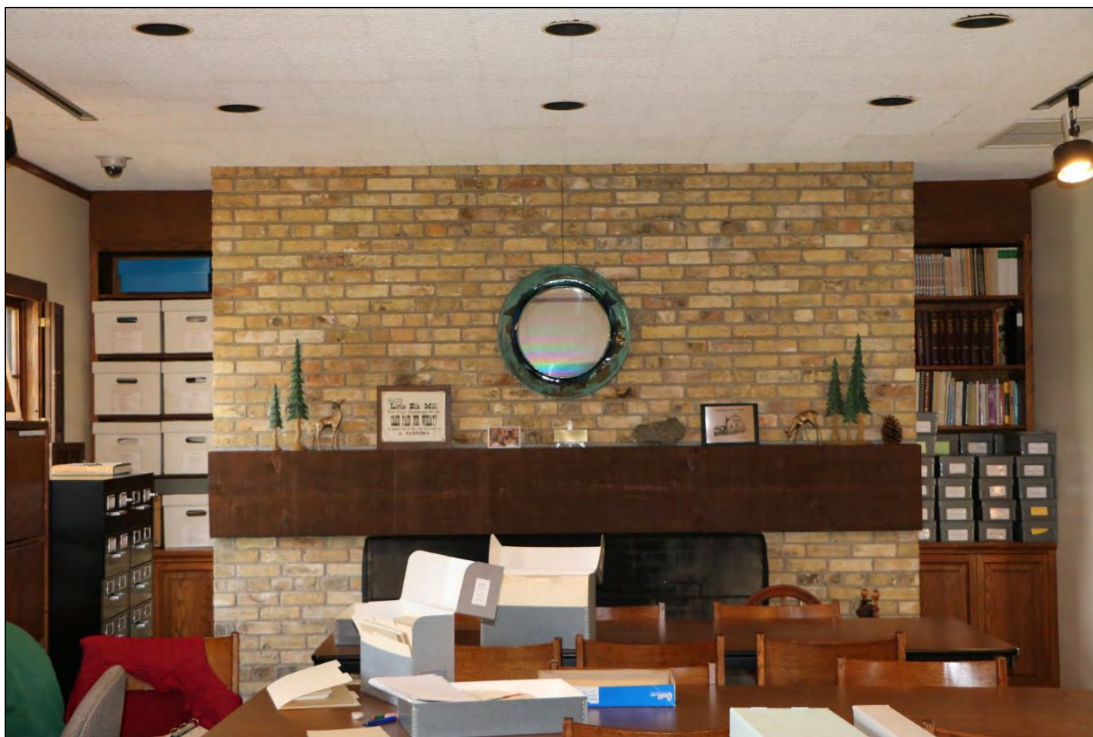
The kitchenette and the director’s office are off the north end of and only accessible through the research room. The kitchenette has a vinyl asbestos tile floor, and the walls and ceiling are gypsum board (Figure 36). Wood baseboards are present, and wood cabinetry is installed on the east wall. A director’s office space did not exist prior to 1988, when the current room was converted from a



**FIGURE 33. ARCHIVE ROOM, 2023, LOOKING SOUTH**



**FIGURE 34. GORDON ROSENMEIER RESEARCH ROOM, 2023, LOOKING SOUTH**



**FIGURE 35. GORDON ROSENMEIER RESEARCH ROOM, FIREPLACE WALL DETAIL, 2023, LOOKING SOUTH**





**FIGURE 36. KITCHENETTE, 2023, LOOKING NORTH**

storage area, with a window added in its east wall. It is carpeted, and it incorporates gypsum board walls, wood baseboards and crown molding, and acoustic-tile ceilings (Figure 37).

North past the east-to-west hall, the east hall extends north to the doorway to the R. D. Musser library. A second full-height brick fireplace with a heavy wood mantel in the center of the north wall, though of lesser width than the one in the research room, forms the focal point of this library (Figure 38). The brick is of the same type but laid in a stretcher-bond pattern. The mantel is etched with the words "GOOD FRIENDS AROUND THESE HEARTH STONES SPEAK NO EVIL WORD OF ANY CREATURE," a phrase that was also inscribed on a fireplace in Charles Weyerhaeuser's house (MCHS 2015). The hearth is slate tile. Aside from the two windows that flank the fireplace,



**FIGURE 37. DIRECTOR'S OFFICE, 2023, LOOKING NORTHWEST**





**FIGURE 38. R. D. MUSSER LIBRARY, FIREPLACE, 2023, LOOKING NORTHWEST**

the north wall is otherwise wood paneling, as is the south wall (Figure 39). The east and west walls are fully occupied by built-in bookshelves (Figure 40). Heavy wood beams run north-to-south at regular intervals under the acoustic-tile ceiling. The library has hardwood floors.

Returning to the east-to-west hall, west of the entrance hall on the north are the restrooms, which have ceramic-tile walls and floors and gypsum board ceilings (Figure 41). East of the entrance hall on the north is the museum office and gift shop (office). The hallway-facing perimeter of this space is defined by a doorway at its southeast corner and wood display cases with glass fronts and shelves which meet at the southwest corner at a wood column with full-height recessed



**FIGURE 39. R. D. MUSSER LIBRARY, SOUTH WALL, 2023, LOOKING SOUTHWEST**



**FIGURE 40. R. D. MUSSER LIBRARY, WEST WALL, 2023, LOOKING WEST**



**FIGURE 41. VIEW OF RESTROOM ENTRANCES, 2023, LOOKING EAST-NORTHEAST**

panels (Figure 42). The tops of the display cases form a service counter. The remaining walls of this space are gypsum board with wood crown moldings and baseboards. It has a carpeted floor and acoustic-tile ceilings.

East of and only accessible through the office is a small storage room. It is outfitted in the same materials as the office, with the exception of the crown moldings, which are absent (Figure 43).





**FIGURE 42. OFFICE AND GIFT SHOP, 2023, LOOKING NORTHEAST**





**FIGURE 43. OFFICE STORAGE ROOM, 2023, LOOKING SOUTH**

## 4.2 SIGNIFICANCE

After the 1958 state centennial, the local history movement in Minnesota entered a specific phase that was marked by the symbiosis of the soaring interest in the history sector of the state's tourism industry with the development of standalone county museum facilities dedicated to the care, expansion, and improved presentation of collections. This phase, which continued through the 1970s and into the early 1980s, witnessed the construction of purpose-built facilities by approximately one-quarter of Minnesota's county historical societies.

The Weyerhaeuser Museum is a particularly strong representative of this phase. Unlike its more utilitarian counterparts in other counties, nearly every aspect of the design of its public spaces, including the exterior and grounds; public corridors; exhibit rooms; the multi-purpose room; and the library, was deliberate in its intent to provide education on or to evoke Morrison County's history. From a functional perspective, that meant the inclusion of a publicly available library in addition to the exhibit rooms. From a material perspective, it meant the use of wood in various forms, slate, local brick, and crushed granite. Visually, it meant the provision of views to the Mississippi River; a building exterior that incorporated references to the county's early architecture; and informal landscaping containing plants native to the county. At the same time, conservation spaces were given equal consideration, with provision for work rooms, storage rooms, and a future addition to accommodate growth. The Weyerhaeuser Museum was and remains the primary repository for objects and archives associated with the history of Morrison County.

The Weyerhaeuser Museum is additionally a particularly strong representative of this phase as a highly intact example of the facilities constructed. Many other purpose-built county museums of the era have been engulfed or altered by expansions, such as the one in Houston County (Figure 44), and a couple have been abandoned altogether for newer facilities, such as the one in Beltrami County, which now houses a retail business (Figure 45).

The Weyerhaeuser Museum, therefore, is significant at the local level under Criterion A in the areas of conservation and entertainment/recreation. As a building that is less than and continues to achieve significance into a period less than 50 years ago, the Weyerhaeuser Museum is subject to Criteria Consideration G, which states that properties meeting these conditions may only be eligible for listing in the National Register if they are of exceptional importance. While the museum is locally significant for its role in conservation and tourism pertaining to Morrison County's history, it did not play an outstanding role in advancing conservation, whether technologically or with regard to exhibit practices, nor did it stand above other offerings in the county in the promotion or survival of the tourism industry there. As such, it does not rise to the level of exceptional significance.



Google Street View

**FIGURE 44. HOUSTON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY BUILDING (1969 CONSTRUCTION AT FOREFRONT), 2023**



Google Street View

**FIGURE 45. FORMER BELTRAMI COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY BUILDING (CONSTRUCTED 1963), 2022**



Charles Weyerhaeuser was a significant individual in the history of Morrison County, and specifically Little Falls, but the museum is not associated with his productive life. Neither is the museum associated with the productive life of an individual of demonstrable historical importance in the field of conservation or tourism, whether at the local, state, or national level. The Weyerhaeuser Museum therefore does not satisfy National Register Criterion B.

The Weyerhaeuser Museum may be considered neo-Traditional given its years of construction and its incorporation of details of Greek Revival architecture. Primarily because it lacks the correct proportions and façade symmetry, but also in smaller part because it lacks the typically even spacing of the columns and the elaboration around the entrance, it is not completely faithful to Greek Revival architecture, even the vernacular version of the mid to late nineteenth century. As such, it also is not an excellent example of neo-Traditional architecture. A broad national Modern architectural trend during the 1970s was the incorporation of largely natural materials, which stemmed from a rising environmentalist movement combining with the energy crisis of the 1970s to steer public attention toward the earth. Although the design of the Weyerhaeuser Museum relies on natural materials, it was purposefully not Modern in its design, and thus does not speak to that trend. While Foster Dunwiddie may be considered a master, the museum is not a pivotal achievement within the context of his other work nor influential as an architectural work. The Weyerhaeuser Museum does not possess high artistic value. The building therefore does not meet Criterion C.

With regard to the historic contexts contained in this report, the Weyerhaeuser Museum does not have the potential to yield information important in history. It therefore does not satisfy Criterion D. It is noted, however, that the museum grounds were subject to a Phase I archaeological survey in the fall of 2023, which identified a precontact lithic scatter designated as a heritage sub-area of a previously identified archaeological site, 21MO0120. The sub-area was recommended as potentially eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion D, i.e., the archaeological site may qualify for the National Register on its own merits (Wilson, Cummings, and McFarlane 2024).

Although the property does not meet Criteria Consideration G standards for eligibility, further elaboration on the site's significance under Criterion A is provided. The period of significance begins in 1975, the year in which the intended first phase of construction was completed. It ends in 1981, the year in which the intended second phase of construction and a second necessary addition were completed, and by which the 1960 through 1983 wave of county museum construction was nearing its end.

The Weyerhaeuser Museum was designed to infuse nearly all details of its architecture and landscaping with references to Morrison County history, and it is the combination of these that



allows it to reflect its significance in informing and entertaining the tourist public. As such, its essential physical features are many. With regard to the exterior, these include those elements and materials referencing Greek Revival architecture and the county's historical industries: the wood lap siding; the wood-shingled roof; the wood simplified-Doric columns, pilasters, and cornice returns; the paneled wood doors; the corbelled, salvaged brick chimney stacks; the 6/1, double-hung wood-sash windows and their accompanying shutters; the large courtyard windows that provide visual access to the Mississippi River; the crushed granite borders surrounding the courtyards; and the prairie-vegetation plantings. The split-rail fences are not visually prominent, and they were not called out as a historical referent or otherwise in the dedication program for the museum. As such, they are not considered essential; however, if they are removed, they should not be replaced with modern fencing material.

The essential physical features with regard to the interior similarly consist of those elements incorporating materials designed to intentionally reflect various aspects of Morrison County's history, including the random-width oak-plank floors; the wood simplified-Doric pilasters; the paneled wood doors; the wood tongue-and-groove facing on the bulkheads; the rough-sawn ceiling beams; the paneled wood walls and bookcases in the library; both brick fireplaces, their wood mantels, and their slate hearths; and the slate floors in the corridors.

The fountain occupies an outdoor space originally intended for museum exhibits, and neither its design nor its materials have a relationship to Morrison County history. It is therefore recommended to be a non-contributing resource.

The wood construction of the gazebo is in keeping with the wood construction of the museum building, but its style does not complement that of the museum, and it was added after the period of significance. It is therefore recommended to be a non-contributing resource.

### 4.3 INTEGRITY

The Weyerhaeuser Museum meets Criterion A in the areas of conservation and entertainment/recreation. Given the intentionality in siting, designing, and selecting the building materials to speak to visitors on various aspects of the history of Morrison County but also in providing functional spaces for conservation and other historical society operations, the aspects of integrity carry generally equal weight in the ability of the property to convey its significance.

- *Location* is the place where the historic property was constructed. *Setting* is the physical environment of a historic property, and includes how, not just where, the property is situated and its relationship to surrounding features, either natural or manmade, and open space. It reflects the basic physical conditions under which a property was built and the functions it was intended to serve.

The Weyerhaeuser Museum is in the location where it was constructed, importantly, adjacent to the Mississippi River. The landscape surrounding the building, courtyards, and parking lot both within the property and in views from it continues to be naturalistic, as was the case during the period of significance, assisting visitors with a historical mindset. The fountain, though not a contributing resource, was installed during the period of significance. The gazebo, built after the period of significance, somewhat diminishes the integrity of setting. This diminishment, however, is mitigated as the gazebo is located on the edge of the property; constructed primarily of wood; and of open-sided construction that prevents it from obscuring the views from within the building toward the Mississippi River. Integrity of location, therefore is excellent, and integrity of setting is very good.

- *Design* is the combination of elements that form plan, space, structure, and style of a property, including organization of space, proportion, scale, technology, ornamentation, and materials. It reflects historic functions and technologies as well as aesthetics. *Materials* are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property. *Workmanship* is the physical evidence of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory. It is the evidence of artisans' labor and skill in constructing or altering a property.

Alterations to the museum building and grounds since the period of significance and, therefore, to its design, materials, and workmanship have been relatively minor, such as the in-kind replacement of one of the windows and an associated shutter after a 1987 vandalism incident; the 1988 conversion of a storage room to the director's office, the window for which is an in-kind addition to the three historically located in the east elevation; additional exhibit display elements; a few cosmetic updates, such as carpet replacement in the museum office and gift shop; and in-kind replacement of all but two exterior doors. The museum continues to function as it did historically. Integrity of design, materials, and workmanship, therefore, is very good to excellent.

- *Association* is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. A property retains association if it is the place where the event or activity occurred and is sufficiently intact to convey that relationship to an observer. It requires the presence of physical features that convey a property's historic character.

The Weyerhaeuser Museum is in the place where it was constructed, and it is highly intact, i.e., strongly able to convey to an observer its identity as a county historical society museum constructed in 1975 and 1981. As indicated by the hitherto discussion of integrity, the physical features essential to conveying its historic character (see Section 4.2) are present. The museum therefore has excellent integrity of association.

- *Feeling* is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.

Integrity of feeling is by and large an outgrowth of the other six aspects of integrity, as it is only logical that the greater the retention of a property's composition, surroundings, and associations from a given historical period, the more the property will evoke the feeling of that period. The museum's integrity of feeling, therefore, is excellent.

#### 4.4 RECOMMENDATION

While the Weyerhaeuser Museum does not satisfy Criteria Consideration G, it is likely to retain its significance under Criterion A once it passes the 50-year threshold. Whether or not it retains the ability to convey its significance under Criterion A at that time will depend on the types and amounts, if any, of alterations that occur to the property before then.

It is recommended that the Weyerhaeuser Museum will be eligible at the 50-year mark if it retains its integrity.



## REFERENCES CITED

### *Fergus Falls Daily Journal*

1974 "Museum is a success from many standpoints." 20 August.

### Gane, John F. and George S. Koyl (editors)

1970 *American Architects Directory, Third Edition*. R. R. Bowker, New York, NY.

### Gillespie, Anne

1971 "Area's history a 'good show' at county musuems." *The Minneapolis Star*. 13 January.

### Grahn, Arch

1955 "State Counties Showing Big Interest in History." *Minneapolis Tribune*. 27 March.

### Gray, James, Alvin Serkland, and Charles Underwood

1968 "Great Historical Collection Crammed into Museum." *Fergus Falls Daily Journal*. 14 November.

### Knudtson, Kathy

1973 "Speakers cite county uniqueness." *The Winona Daily News*. 17 October.

### Koyl, George S. (editor)

1956 *American Architects Directory, First Edition*. R. R. Bowker, New York, NY.

1962 *American Architects Directory, Second Edition*. R. R. Bowker, New York, NY.

### Larson, Norman

1966 "They Make the Past Live: Historical Societies On the Grow." *Minneapolis Tribune*. 4 September.

### Lehrke, Terry

2017 "Rotary breathes new life into old cemetery." *Morrison County Record* online. 25 August.

### Miller Dunwiddie Architects, Inc.

1981 Facility and Interpretive Program Study of the Charles A. Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum, Little Falls, Minnesota. MCHS subject file, "MUSEUM – Miller-Dunwiddie Architects."

### Minnesota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)

2017 Historic and Architectural Survey Manual. Available online at [https://mn.gov/admin/assets/surveymanual\\_tcm36-327675.pdf](https://mn.gov/admin/assets/surveymanual_tcm36-327675.pdf)

Morrison County Historical Society (MCHS)

n.d. "The Gift of a Museum." Available online at [https://morrisoncountyhistory.org/?page\\_id=1247](https://morrisoncountyhistory.org/?page_id=1247).

2015 "#Weymu40 – Good Friend Around These Hearthstones." Available online at <https://morrisoncountyhistory.org/?p=5156>.

National Park Service

1983 Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. Available online at [http://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/arch\\_stnds\\_0.htm](http://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/arch_stnds_0.htm).

2002 How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. Available online at <http://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15>.

Pepin, Mrs. Lloyd

1967 "Historical Society Began As WPA Writers Project." 21 July.

Pizza, Andrea C.

2020 *Minnesota Trunk Highway Roadside Properties, 1932-1975: A Cumulative Study, Volume 1*. Deco Cultural Services LLC. Submitted to the Minnesota Department of Transportation.

*The St. Cloud Daily Times*

1941 "Historical Society Outlines Program Of Museum Service." 27 November.

1956 "The Minnesota Story." 11 September.

1967 "Several Articles Given to Museum." 16 January.

*Star Tribune*

1993 "Architect William J. Miller, 69, dies." 22 March.

University of Minnesota, Northwest Architectural Archives

n.d. "Foster Dunwiddie papers: Biographical Note." Available online at <https://archives.lib.umn.edu/repositories/8/resources/6083>.

Wilson, Mike, James Cummings, and Joe McFarlane

2024 *Phase I Archaeological Investigation, Weyerhaeuser Memorial Museum Grounds, Morrison County, Minnesota*. McFarlane Consulting LLC. Submitted to Morrison County Historical Society.