ST. MARY CARMELITE CATHOLIC CHURCH
Condition Assessment

113 North Ottawa Street
Joliet, Illinois

Final Report
November 12, 2019
WJE No. 2019.1266.5

Prepared for:
Landmarks Illinois
30 North Michigan Avenue, Suite 2020
Chicago, Illinois 60602

On behalf of
Joliet Historic Preservation Commission

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BACKGROUND

Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc. (WJE) has prepared this report for a limited evaluation of St. Mary’s Catholic Church and Carmelite Priory located at 113 North Ottawa Street in Joliet, Illinois. The church was designed by architect Patrick Charles Keely and completed in 1882. Designed in the Gothic Revival Style, St. Mary’s Church is generally rectangular in plan with a half octagon apse on the west side. An aerial view can be seen in Figure 1. The church measures approximately 70 feet in the north south direction and 132 feet in the east west direction. There is a 202-foot-tall bell tower on the east side of the church. There are pointed arch entrances with wood frame windows and openings with wood tracery. The cladding includes rusticated ashlar Joliet limestone with smooth Joliet limestone surrounding the openings. The steep pitched roof is covered with composite cement tiles. The first floor is elevated from grade with the main entrance on the east side. The main entrance stairs have been modified several times, most recently in 1968. There are also stairs leading from the apse on the northwest corner. The Roman Catholic Diocese of Joliet held the last mass in the building in 1991, and the church was sold in 2012. The church was on Landmark Illinois 2005-2006 Watchlist. Overall views of the Church are shown in Figure 2 through Figure 4.

The Fiat House, (the Priory) is sited next to the church and was dedicated in 1962. The Priory is rectangular in plan and two stories in height, and is constructed in a vernacular modernist style. The east facade of the Priory has ashlar limestone cladding on the first floor with buff colored brick on the second floor. There are limestone window surrounds and copings. The other walls are clad with brick masonry. An overall view of the Priory is shown in Figure 5.

OBSERVATIONS

On October 23, 2019, Amanda Marshall and Joshua Freedland of WJE performed an assessment from grade, the roof of the Priory and limited interior spaces. No inspections of concealed conditions were completed or close-up assessments of inaccessible areas. In general, the church is in stable condition. There appears to have been limited recent maintenance of the exterior. The interior finishes have largely been removed except for the plaster. The priory is generally in serviceable condition, and the interior finishes have been removed. The following conditions were observed:

Church

1. The existing steep slope roof is covered with what appears to be cement composite tile roofing. The roof has algae growth, soiling and isolated missing tiles throughout the main roof and tower roof (Figure 6 and Figure 7).
2. Loose and bent copper flashing and counter flashings with failed sealant joints at the interface with the limestone masonry throughout the building (Figure 8).
3. The lowest section of downspouts is missing at each downspout location (Figure 9).
4. The lower roof, south of the apse, which slopes south, has asphalt shingles that generally appear in serviceable condition. The portion of this roof that slopes west contains the cement composite shingles found on the rest of the church (Figure 10).
5. On the exterior face, the mortar joints are typically in poor condition, with widespread cracked and missing mortar (Figure 11). The following specific conditions were noted:
   a. Open joints and stair step cracks in the limestone joints at east facing wall south of apse, including displacement of limestone copings (Figure 12).
   b. Open joints and cracked and displaced brick masonry at southwest chimney (Figure 13).
   c. Isolated areas of stair step cracks in the mortar joints, including at the west facade between the first story and second story windows (Figure 14).
6. Iron staining and spalls from ferrous anchors in the limestone course below the roof. This was more pronounced on the south facade (Figure 15).
7. Isolated cracks, spalls and imminent limestone spalls, including around the ocular window on the south facade of the tower (Figure 16).
8. Algae growing on the exterior stone cladding, especially where downspouts are missing (Figure 17).
9. Vines are present on the north facade of the limestone masonry (Figure 18).
10. The lowest courses of limestone exhibit surface erosion and spalling, as well as failed mortar joints including eroded, bond separation and missing mortar (Figure 19 and Figure 20).
11. Peeling and missing paint on the exterior surface of the wood window surrounds, including the sills.
12. Checks in wooden components (Figure 21 and Figure 22).
13. Isolated broken windows including the ocular window on the south facade of the tower.
14. Missing wooden slats and components on the tower (Figure 23).
15. Broken or missing protective glazing on the colored glass windows. Some of the windows have been previously boarded up (Figure 24). The glass in a window on the upper portion of the east facade is missing.
16. The window perimeter sealant is typically crazed or debonded.
17. The doors on the east facade have been previously boarded up with painted plywood. The wood components have peeling and failed paint (Figure 25).
18. Generally, the interior plaster of the church sanctuary remains intact with only limited areas of water damage, including on the south nave (Figure 26 and Figure 27). Much of the interior paint has peeled from the plaster surfaces.
19. The non-original front entrance is in a state of advanced deterioration, including missing and loose cladding, spalled and imminent spalls of limestone cladding, and surface corrosion of the railings. The entrance currently has caution tape to limit access to the steps. (Figure 28 through Figure 30).
20. The stair at the northwest corner has displaced steel railings and spalled concrete (Figure 31).

**Priory**

21. No leaks have been reported related to the low slope built-up roofing, but the copper roof flashings are typically cracked and/or open. (Figure 32 and Figure 33).
22. Isolated vertical cracks in the brick masonry near the corners in the brick masonry parapet and the brick chimney (Figure 34).
23. The masonry is generally in serviceable condition (Figure 35).
24. Cracked mortar joints and slight outward displacement of the brick masonry at the second-floor lintels.
25. Surface corrosion of exposed surface of the steel lintels on the south facade (Figure 36).
26. The mortar joints have some erosion but are generally serviceable.
27. There is algae on the limestone window surrounds and copings.
28. The windows are set within punched openings in the masonry walls. The original windows have been replaced.
29. The window perimeter sealant is typically crazed or debonded.
30. The interior finishes of the Priory have largely been removed, exposing the interior wood columns and roof and floor framing (Figure 37).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Church

Generally, the church is considered to be in stable condition; however, limited recent maintenance has led to widespread deterioration. The roof is missing tiles throughout the church, and there is evidence of water infiltration inside, which is damaging isolated areas of the remaining interior finishes. The roof is at the end of its serviceable life and replacement of the roof on the church and spire should be completed soon to limit further water infiltration and accelerated damage of the interior finishes and masonry. As part of the roof replacement, loose, bent and damaged flashing and counter flashing should be replaced. The roof framing and sheathing should be evaluated and repaired or replaced as necessary. Downspouts should be repaired and the discharged water should be directed away from the building.

The masonry, including the tower, is considered in stable condition with no significant displacement, bulging or otherwise significant distress observed. There are isolated imminent spalls observed which present a fall hazard. The imminent spalls occurred most frequently at face bedded limestone units and are a result of weathering. These imminent spalls should be removed. The limestone beneath the gutters should be inspected close-up to identify any cracks or imminent spalls. The mortar joints are typically in some state of deterioration as a result of long-term water infiltration primarily through open mortar joints, insufficient downspouts, and failed intersections between materials. This has also led to cyclic freeze-thaw damage to the masonry. The limestone near grade is deteriorated due to damage from deicing salts and rising damp. Severely deteriorated units near grade should be replaced with Joliet limestone. The vines on the north facade should be removed to limit additional damage to the masonry. Long-term maintenance could include cleaning of the masonry.

WJE did not perform a detailed window-by-window survey, but representative conditions were noted in the Observations section above. In general, the existing wood windows have deteriorated coatings and splits in the frames and sills. While close-up inspections of the windows were not possible, the glazing putty is also likely deteriorated or missing. Glazing putty and deteriorated sealant at the window perimeters is indicative of deferred maintenance. Isolated replacement elements or dutchman can be installed and the wood elements prepared and recoated. Perimeter sealant should be removed and replaced at all windows. There are isolated broken windows that may present falling hazards. The secondary protective glazing should be removed and replaced. The wood louvers in the tower have lost components and should be reviewed close-up. Loose components should be removed and the louvers should be restored.

The non-original entrance on the east is unsafe. Additional measures should be taken to prevent people from using the stairs. The non-original entrance should be repaired or removed. The deteriorated stairs at the northwest corner should be removed. A new staircase should be installed, as necessary, to accommodate the use of the building.

Priory

The roof at the Priory is deteriorated at the interface of the parapet wall and requires maintenance. Inspection openings should be performed to evaluate the roof, sheathing and framing, to determine the extent of deterioration. The masonry conditions of the Priory were generally minor and can be addressed as part of a future repair and maintenance campaign. Repairs would include exposing the steel lintels and
cleaning and coating the steel, as well as isolated repointing and rebuilding the outer wythe of brick masonry at the second-floor lintels through the parapet. If desired, the limestone portions of the facade could be cleaned. The non-original windows should be evaluated close-up to determine the extent of repairs or replacement, as needed. At the least, window perimeter sealant should be replaced.

PRIORITIZED RECOMMENDATIONS

While in need of maintenance, the Church and Priory are generally in serviceable condition. The Church is significant to the history and architectural heritage of Joliet and should be considered for adaptive reuse. There are several examples of successful adaptive reuse of churches and temples as restaurants. The Eris Brewery and Cider House, a former masonic lodge which a large space similar to a church, recently won a 2019 Driehaus award for Adaptive Reuse from Landmarks Illinois. The modified front entrance on the east is considered not to be a contributing element and should be removed and replaced with a compatible design that meets the needs of the adaptive reuse. The Priory is generally in serviceable condition and it could be incorporated as a support space for the adaptive reuse of the church, or it may be removed with the lot being used as part of a larger development for the church.

The repair recommendations provided below have been developed from our visual inspections of the building components only. Priority 1 repairs are those that need to be addressed within the next year to manage potentially hazardous conditions. Priority 2 repairs are those needing to be addressed in the next three to five years to limit further deterioration and maintain the integrity of the structure. Priority 3 repairs should be anticipated within the next five to ten years and are generally considered maintenance items. As with all repair projections, these time frames are based on the development and execution of an ongoing facade maintenance program that includes performing some unanticipated repairs on an as-needed basis. Alternatively, more aggressive repair and maintenance programs could be developed to lengthen the time between repair and maintenance work on the building. It may be cost effective to coordinate repairs from different phases due to required access.

Based on our review of the facades, we offer the following repair recommendations for the church:

**Priority 1: $450,000 to $600,000**

1. Perform a close-up, hands-on inspection and remove imminent hazards from the tower including loose imminent limestone spalls and loose wood components from the louvers from the tower. Install temporary measures in the louver to prevent water infiltration and birds from entering the tower.
   - Estimated cost: $20,000
2. Perform a close-up, hands-on inspection and remove imminent hazards including loose imminent limestone spalls and broken glass from the church. Install temporary measures to prevent water infiltration and birds from entering the church.
   - Estimated cost: $30,000
3. Remove and replace the Church roof.
   - Estimated cost: $350,000 for replacement using asphalt shingles. Alternately, architectural asphalt shingles could be used for an estimated cost of $500,000
4. Temporarily secure front entrance and stairs at northwest corner
   - Estimated costs $10,000
5. Repair damaged gutters and downspout.
   - Estimated cost: $5,000
6. Isolated repointing of limestone masonry
   - Estimated $50,000 allowance
Priority 2: $700,000 to $800,000

6. Restore louvers, and windows in tower*
   ▪ Estimated cost: $80,000
7. Restore wood window frames and replace window perimeter sealant.
   ▪ Estimated cost: $150,000
8. Repoint all limestone masonry of tower and install isolated dutchman units*
   ▪ $100,000
9. Replace protective glazing.
   ▪ Estimated cost: $50,000 allowance
10. Remove vines and overgrown landscaping
    ▪ Estimated cost: $10,000
11. Remove non-contributing front entrance and rebuild new entrance
    ▪ Estimated cost: $150,000
12. Remove non-contributing back staircase and rebuild new staircase
    ▪ Estimated cost: $15,000
13. Remove loose or deteriorated limestone units at base and isolated repointing at severely deteriorated joints
    ▪ Estimated cost: $150,000

*Access costs to provide pipe scaffolding for the tower rood and windows work is not included in the above costs. Anticipated access costs may be $100,000. It is likely cost effective to consider all repair work for the tower in all phases concurrently.

Priority 3: $350,000 to $400,000

14. Repoint 100 percent of mortar joints
    ▪ Estimated cost: $250,000
15. Clean algae from masonry.
    ▪ Estimated cost: $100,000

LIMITATIONS

Because of the limitations in detecting concealed internal distress in many components, this assessment may not identify all distress conditions that are not readily visible. WJE shall not be responsible for latent or hidden defects that may exist, nor shall it be inferred that all defects have been either observed or recorded. WJE has performed this assessment and prepared this report in accordance with the applicable standard of care for architects and engineers performing such services.
Figure 1. Aerial view (Photography credit: Joliet Historic Preservation Commission)
Figure 2. Overall view of east facade

Figure 3. Overall view of north facade
Figure 4. Overall view of west facade
Figure 5. Overall view of Priory
Figure 6. Detail of south side of roof

Figure 7. Overall view of south side of tower

Figure 8. Loose and bent copper flashing

Figure 9. Missing downspout
Figure 10. Portion of lower roof south of Apse replaced and portion remains composite shingles (red arrow)

Figure 11. Open mortar joints

Figure 12. Open joints at east facing wall south of apse

Figure 13. Brick chimney at southwest corner
Figure 14. Stair step crack of mortar joints (red arrow)

Figure 15. Spalls and iron oxide staining of limestone

Figure 16. Imminent spall of limestone (red arrow) and broken glass (green arrow)

Figure 17. Staining below downspout
Figure 18. Vines on north side

Figure 19. Deteriorate limestone at base of wall

Figure 20. Deteriorated limestone at base of wall

Figure 21. Peeling paint from wood window frames and sills
Figure 22. Peeling paint from wood window frames and sills

Figure 23. Missing wood slats in louver on south facade of tower
Figure 24. Partially boarded up window on south wall

Figure 25. Partially boarded up door on east facade
Figure 26. Overall interior view of church

Figure 27. Location of water damage of church ceiling (red arrow)

Figure 28. Overall view of non-original entrance

Figure 29. Overall view of missing and damaged components to added entrance
Figure 30. Detail of spall from corrosion of steel railing

Figure 31. Overall view of staircase at northwest corner

Figure 32. Overall view of Priory roof

Figure 33. Detail of roof interface
Figure 34. Isolated crack in brickwork and cracked flashing at parapet

Figure 35. Overall view of east facade

Figure 36. Surface corrosion on exposed steel lintels (red arrow)

Figure 37. Overall view of second floor