



NEW HISTORY

PROPERTY MEMORANDUM

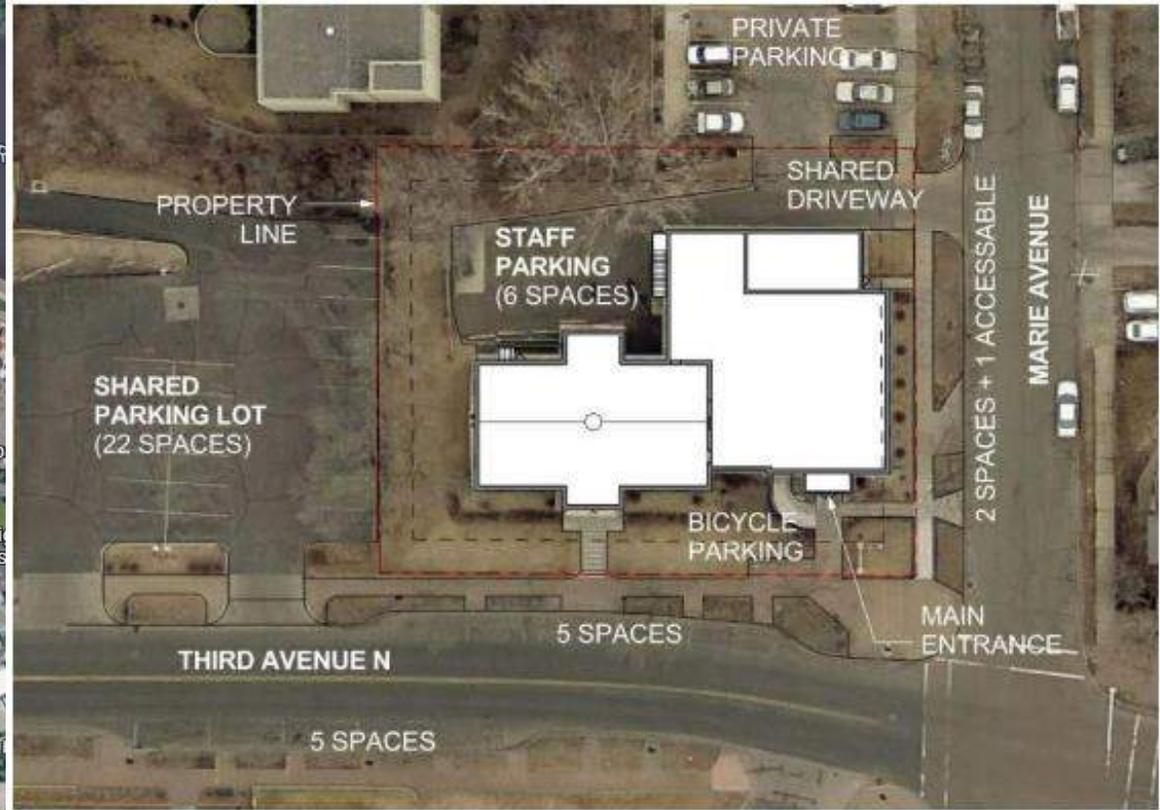
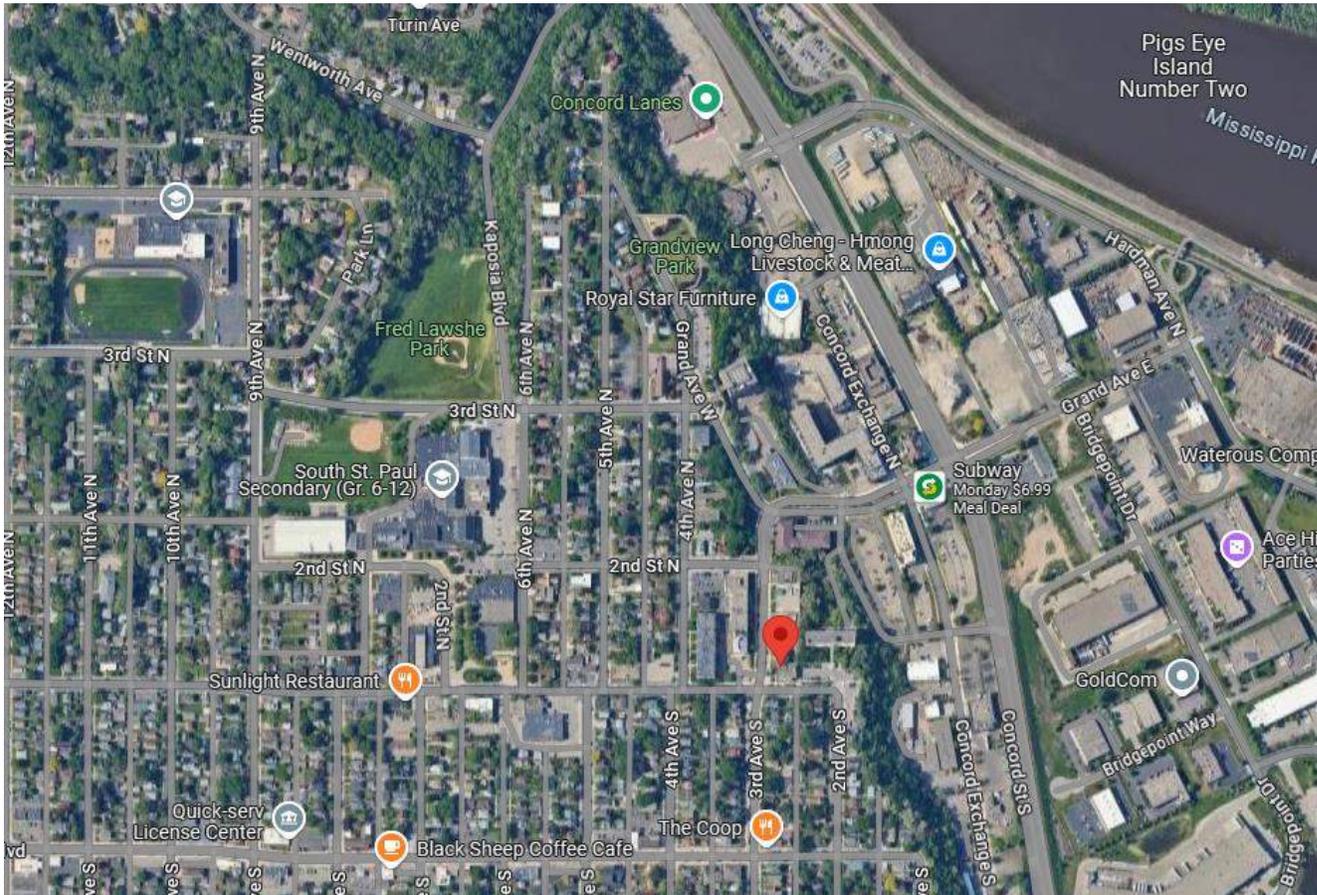
AMERICAN LEGION MEMORIAL LIBRARY
106 THIRD AVENUE NORTH | SOUTH ST. PAUL, MN



PROPERTY HIGHLIGHTS

1. Due to the library's significant role as a community asset during the twentieth century, there is a **high likelihood that the building may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)**, which can promote its preservation and unlock access to public and private funding.
2. The building site, at the top of the bluff, presents challenges to reuse. **The MRCCA-regulated setbacks will limit additions**, and may affect retention of the northeast parking lot. The bluff may also require a macro remediation strategy beyond the extents of the library site, and partnership with the HRA/HUD neighbor may be warranted.
3. The site's **C-1 zoning designation** allows for a wide range of uses, offering flexibility for both public and private reuse options.
4. The **surrounding area includes a mix of residential, commercial, and public uses**. This clustering of public destinations may open opportunities for complementary reuse options and partnerships with entities such as the City of South St. Paul, Dakota County, and the SSP School District.
5. The site has **limited on-site parking with a total of six spaces**, relying primarily on street parking and nearby public parking lot options.
6. The **building is relatively small (11,840 SF)** and as a purpose-built library building, the configuration of spaces is specific to its former use.
7. The building's physical conditions suggest **remedial work needed for reuse**:
 - Brick masonry and steel lintel deterioration on the 1927 building is in need of remediation
 - Mechanical systems are aged and in need of updating units as well as some distribution systems, with options to retain some ductwork and piping.
 - Plumbing, electrical, and sanitary/sewer systems require upgrades for code compliance.
 - The cupola on the 1927 roof, constructed mostly of wood, is weathered and in need of maintenance, with replacement of some wood necessary.
 - The structural systems are in fair to good condition, with the exception of water-related damage noted.
8. The **hazardous material survey and sampling identified asbestos-containing materials (ACM's) and lead-based paint** in the building. While these do not appear prohibitive to reuse, they will require appropriate budgeting and careful planning for their treatment.

LOCATION



Site plan of existing conditions by LSE from the 2016 Library Assessment and Planning Study

DESIGN

In 1927, the city commissioned the St. Paul architectural firm of Ellerbe and Company to design the library. Designed in the Colonial Revival style, the two-story brick library has a rectangular footprint and massing, with a lower level raised partially above grade. It has a gabled roof topped with an octagonal cupola with copper roof and finial.

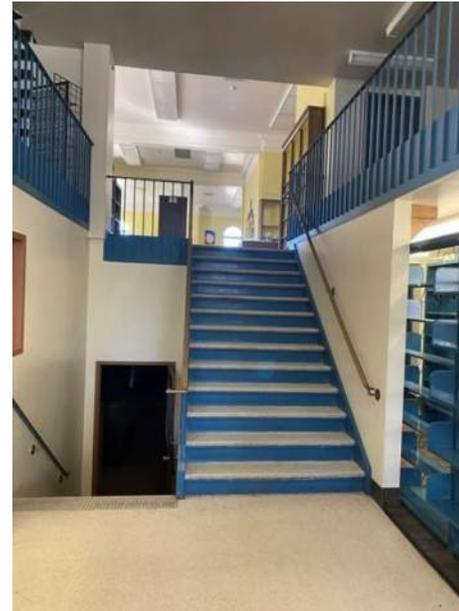
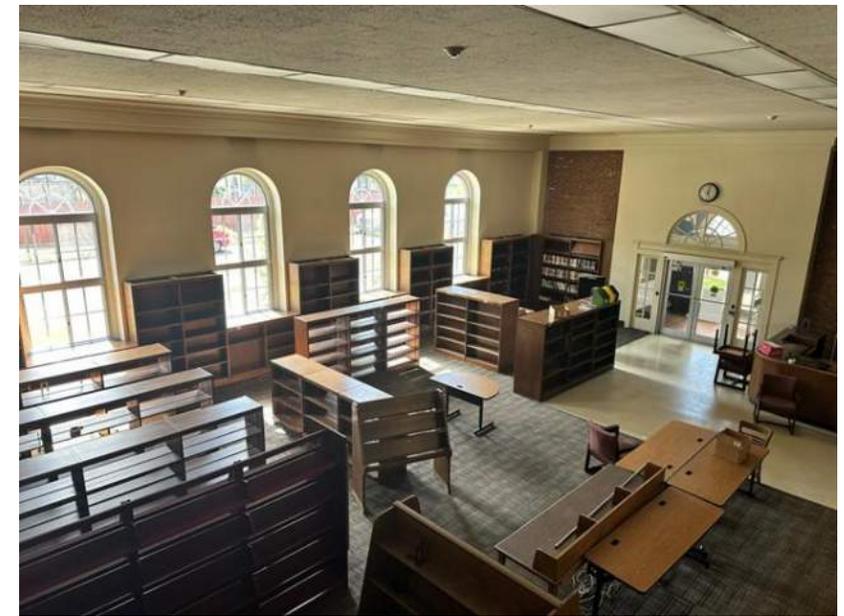
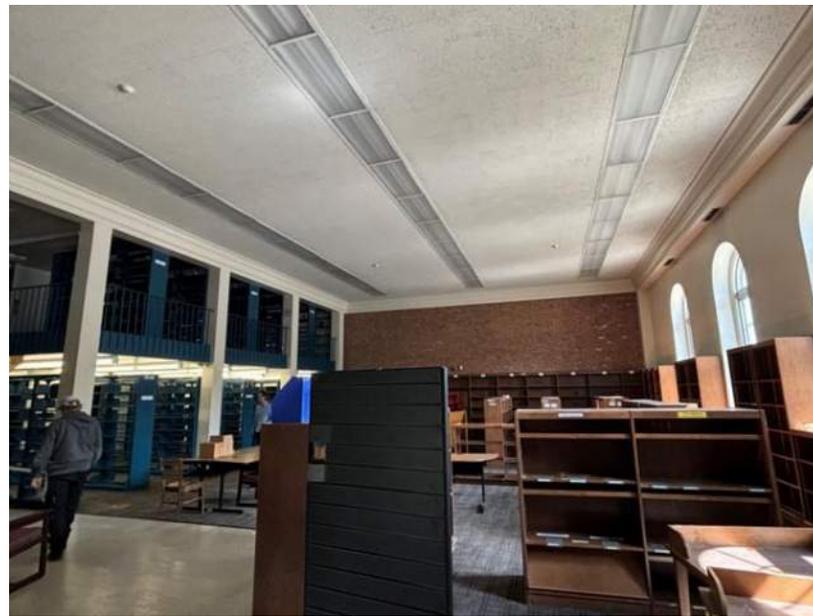


In 1965, overcrowding led to the construction of a new wing at the building's south elevation. The one-story brick addition with partial mezzanine level, also designed by the architectural firm of Ellerbe and Company, mirrors the Colonial Revival style of the original 1927 building.



INTERIOR

The main accessible entrance is through the 1965 addition. As you enter, this is a two-story volume with a mezzanine at the north side.



INTERIOR

The original 1927 building is two stories. There are tall ceilings, built-in book storage and a fireplace at the main reading room, and a small children's room at the first level. The basement contains one large room and mechanical spaces. It is subgrade on the west side of the building and opens to the parking lot on the east.

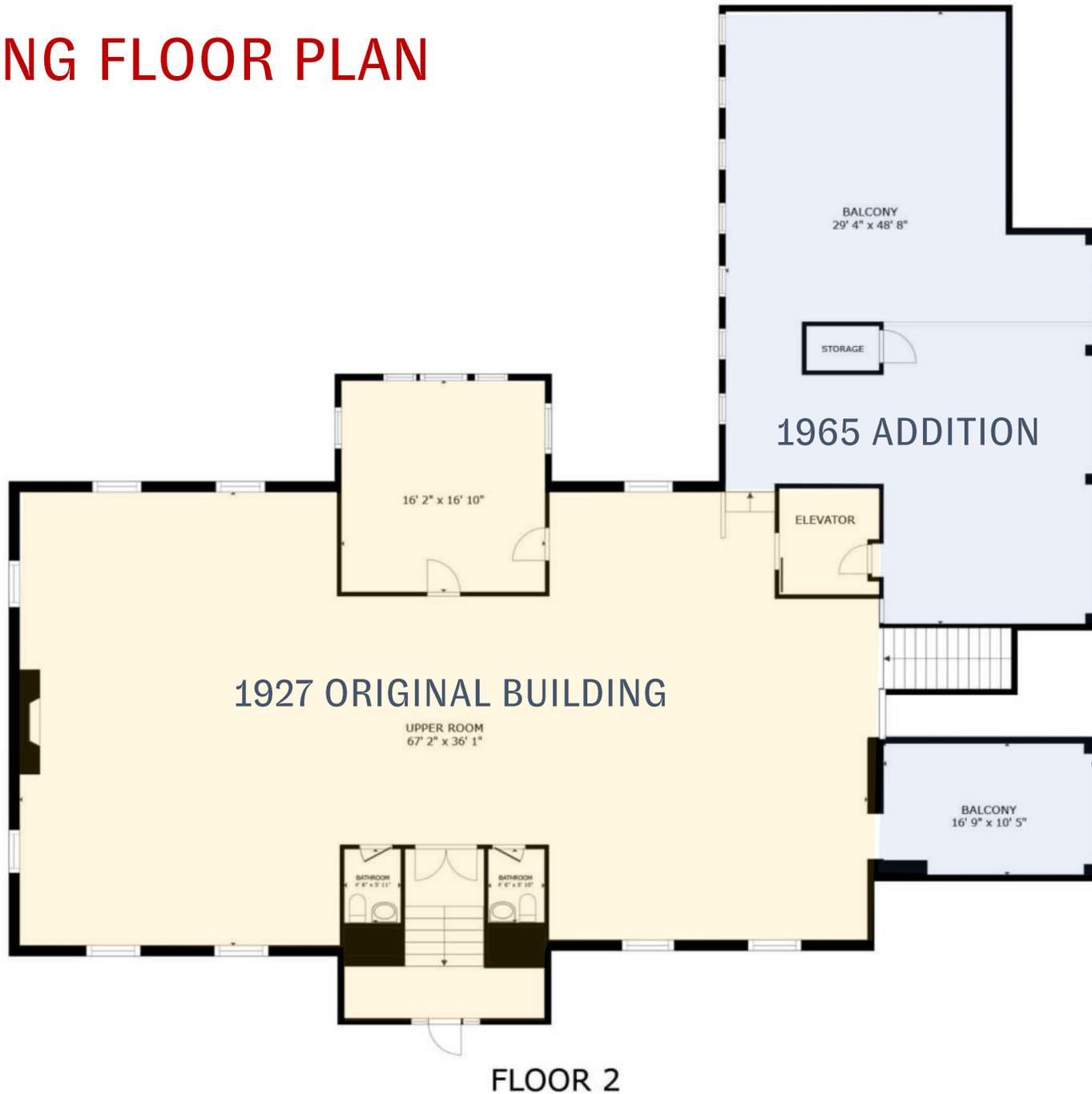


EXISTING FLOOR PLAN



FLOOR 1

EXISTING FLOOR PLAN



Understanding the historical context



- **1880s+** – South Saint Paul’s riverfront area began to see industrial development. The meat packing industry was particularly successful, and during the twentieth century, the Swift & Company (plant constructed beginning in 1897) and the Armor & Company (plant constructed beginning in 1919) dominated the local economy.
- **1916** – “Up the hill”, the city established the library commission, secured a \$10,000 pledge from the Carnegie foundation and two lots of land.
- **1922** – The city authorized the purchase of \$2,500 books and opened a small library within the Fitzgerald Building.
- **1923** – The South St. Paul American Legion Post began a fundraising campaign and citizens approved a \$25,000 bond issue in a special election, supplemented by Dakota County. With this funding, the city hired St. Paul architectural firm of Ellerbe and Company to design the library in the Colonial Revival style
- **1927** – The American Memorial Library was the culmination of a decade of community effort to construct the building. The building was the first purpose-built library in Dakota County.

In her book, *South St. Paul Centennial*, local historian Lois Glewwe notes that following the library’s construction, “almost immediately the new building became a bustling center of activity” and “for many years,” the basement “was used for social events, wedding receptions, and civic functions.”

- **1952** – The library opened a “Children’s Room” in the basement.
- **1961** – A mobile “bookmobile” program to distribute library collections across the community was established.
- **1965** – The most significant change to the library building occurred, when overcrowding led to the construction of a new wing at the building’s south elevation.

Another historical tidbit...

At the same time the library was being conceived, women in South St. Paul were making history as the first in the nation to vote.

South St. Paul still plants yellow roses to commemorate women's suffrage.

National History Made in South St. Paul Today When Women Vote Under the New Law

South St. Paul's special \$85,000 waterworks bond election today was of much more concern and placed this city in the national spotlight. It was the first election ever held in the United States at which women had the same constitutional right to the ballot as men, as only yesterday afternoon by proclamation of the Secretary of State Colby at Washington, following the ratification of the 19th Amendment. Miss Marguerite Newburgh cast the first vote at the second precinct, second ward (City Hall), making her the first woman to vote in the Nation.

In that election on August 27, 1920, ninety South St. Paul women voted in this historic election.

**SOUTH ST. PAUL WOMEN ARE
FIRST IN AMERICA TO VOTE
UNDER UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE**





Based on our research, the American Legion Memorial Library has a **high potential for listing in the National Register of Historic Places** .

It appears to be **historically significant under NPS Criterion A** for its role in community education and civic life. As the city's only public library from 1927 until 2023, and a public event space until at least 1952.

Because the library continued in this location through 2023, the **property's historic period ("period of significance") would be 1927 until 1975**, fifty years from the year in which a NRHP nomination could be submitted (2025), to account for the "50 year" rule

All features present by 1975 should be considered **"historic," including the 1965 addition**, but not all historic elements rise to the level of "character-defining", or contributing to its historic character.

If it was placed on the National Register and **privately-owned** as an income generating property, a rehabilitation could **qualify for Historic Tax Credits**.

STAKEHOLDER AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS:

1. Centrally located with proximity to nearby civic spaces and the police station making it easy to walk, bike or use public transportation at this location.
2. This building is symbolic to the community, a physical representation of the city's history.
3. The community has expressed desires for the following uses:
 1. Entertainment
 2. Retail shops
 3. Office space
 4. A food and drink establishment
 5. Affordable childcare, teen center or youth services
 6. Business incubator
 7. Health/wellness/medical services
 8. Fitness/recreation
 9. Uses that promote cultural enrichment (ie. music lessons, Cultural center, museum)
 10. Residential use as an amenity to existing or new housing development.
4. Many community partners are interested in collaborating or leasing space – The Mayor, City Council, Dakota County, Parks & Rec, Neighbors Inc, Nan McKay/HRA

UTILITY COSTS

USAGE		
	2022	2023
TOTAL ELECTRIC USAGE (KWH)	76,982	74,231
TOTAL ELECTRICAL COST (\$)	\$13,214	\$12,966
TOTAL NATURAL GAS USAGE(THERMS)	8,338	6,983
TOTAL NATURAL GAS COST (\$)	\$9,309	\$7,016
TOTAL ENERGY USAGE (KBTU/YEAR)	1,096,500	951,600
BUILDING AREA(SF)	11,000	11,000
EUI (KBTU/SF/YEAR)	99.7	86.5



FOR MORE INFORMATION:

City website contains the full building assessment:

<https://www.southstpaul.org/887/South-St-Paul-Library-Reuse-Study>

*Click the image for a
hyperlink to
Matterport Scan of
Existing Building*



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