

August 8, 2014

Mr. Benjamin Frederick
Mayor
City of Owosso
301 W. Main Street
Owosso, Michigan

Re: Lyon-Seigmiller House
Architectural Assessment
Owosso, Michigan

Dear Mr. Frederick:

Per our email agreement of July 8, 2014 I hereby submit to the City of Owosso and the Owosso Historical Society my Overview Architectural Assessment of the historic Lyon-Seigmiller House. The attached report is based on my site visit of July 25, 2014 at which time my wife Lynne, Gary Willson and Aaron Maike, the President of Baker College accompanied me. Mr. James Gutting also shared his knowledge, at lunch time, of the house and sent me historic photos.

I trust that this document will be helpful in the decision making process that will determine the future of the Lyon-Seigmiller House.

Respectfully,

RESENDES DESIGN GROUP

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Edward D. Francis", with a small dot above the "i" in "Francis".

Mr. Edward D. Francis, FAIA
Principal and Historic Architect

August 8, 2014

ARCHITECTURAL ASSESSMENT

LYON-SEIGMILLER HOUSE
501 W. Williams St.
Owosso, Michigan

Resendes Design Group
7451 Third Street
Detroit, Michigan 48202

For clarity, we have arranged this Overview Architectural Assessment into the following sections:

- I SUMMARY
- II SITE
- III BUILDING
 - a. Historical Overview
 - b. Structure
 - c. Exterior
 - d. Interior
 - e. Preservation Overview
 - f. General Observations
 - g. Standard Building Survey Form
 - h. Cost Range Estimate

I SUMMARY

The Lyon-Seigmiller House is a significant historic residence in the Curwood-Dewey neighborhood of Owosso. The house has associative historical value having been constructed by Daniel Lyon an Owosso pioneer and skilled mason. The house was occupied by his son Gilbert who was a well-known attorney, the Seigmiller family and later served as medical offices for Dr. Chipman. George Hoddy, a local philanthropist and next door neighbor, purchased the house as part of the "Hoddy Block" and maintained the skin integrity of this structure for years.

The site has archaeological significance as the reputed burial place of Chief Wasso and the existence of the Ojibwa Council Oak on the property.

The house is architecturally significant as an example of the Italianate style popular in the 1840's and 60's.

It is the writer's opinion that the site would qualify for State and National Historical Designation.

The house which has been vacant for 40 years contains 4,350 square feet plus a 525 square foot anachronistic garage. The exterior design integrity remains intact with minor changes. The interior, on the other hand is in fair to poor condition, absent Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and contemporary electrical systems. The small 250 square foot basement area was flooded in the spring due to a disconnected sump pump and grading that directs surface water to the house basement.

The most serious structure issue exists in the crawl space area where the removal of portions of the bearing masonry walls, soft brick, undersized steel lintels and piers have caused structural movement in the kitchen area. Ten Thousand dollars (\$10,000) invested at this time to stabilize the structure will prevent a costly major interior collapse. With structural stabilization completed in the crawl space along with an operating sump the Lyon-Seigmiller is a prime candidate for rehabilitation for residential or office use.

The estimated cost range for the rehabilitation of the house with fees, administrative cost and contingencies is \$489,000 to \$604,000; let's say \$500,000 to \$600,000. This cost range does not include furnishings, fixed equipment or landscaping. The rehabilitation could be phased to reduce initial cost by limiting work to the first floor and using volunteer labor, in-kind services and donated materials, etc.

According to the late James Fitch, the historian, "The ultimate objective of all preservation activities may be said to be didactic: to teach the citizen better to understand where he came from and as a means of helping him to decide where he ought to go." Fortunately we have matured past the period where the only possible way to save an old house was to start another house museum. A reuse programming for the Lyon-Seigmiller House could be a marvelous opportunity to put reuse to practical application. The history of the building must not be of such a restrictive nature to make reuse impossible; however, the design must be so careful that any changes in the exterior fabric must be severely limited so that the historic ambiance of the area is maintained. Contemporary thinking is that the main purpose of restoration is not to save money (as important as that is) but to respect and maintain good examples of the built environment. In the case of the Lyon-Seigmiller House, the environment is more than the single house and the "Hoddy Block", but the context of the Curwood-Dewey Neighborhood.

II SITE

In a regional sense the City of Owosso is a large rural town located about midway between Flint and Lansing along the M-21 corridor. M-52 runs north to Saginaw and south to I-96 and I-69. Owosso is centrally located in Shiawassee County which contains a population of 69,000. The County has recently evolved into a "Bedroom Community" for Flint and Lansing and population is expected to grow as Owosso's "Quality of Life" reputation spreads.

The house is located in a historic residential area and is not visible from major collector roads. The existence of the house contributes to the neighborhood visual scale, density and texture. The house is located at the pivot point between the historic James Oliver Curwood House and the Thomas Dewey boyhood home.

The house is orientated south to the Shiawassee River within six blocks of the Memorial Healthcare Center to the north and six blocks of Owosso City Center to the southeast. An occupied residence is located 60 feet to the north and the former Curwood House is 130 feet plus or minus to the west (It is believed that a buildable site exists in this zone). The site is estimated to be 150 x 120 or Four tenths of an acre.

The single most significant landscape feature is the Council Oak, located at the corner of Williams Street and Pine Street, reported to be the burial place of the Ojibwa Chief Wasso, the City's namesake. Base planting around the house is out of control and should be removed. The grade level around the foundation of older homes naturally raises over time. The existing grade elevation should be lowered and a swale placed on the west side to direct water, now flowing directly to the house, away to the south.

III BUILDING

A. Historical Overview

The Lyon-Seigmiller House was built by Daniel Lyon in the 1860's, renovated in the 1890's, 1920's and 1950's. This 30 year pacing of renovations is common.

The house was purchased by George Hoddy in the 1980's to store antiques and has been unoccupied for the last 40 years. Mr. Hoddy donated the property to Baker College upon his passing.

The design is somewhat eccentric, an individualized example of the Italianate style which was a popular residential building form in the United States from 1840 to 1880. This style is described in *Identifying American Architecture* by John J.G. Blumenson, 2nd printing 1978 as follows:

"The Italianate style is a rectangular (almost square), two or three-story house with very wide eaves usually supported by large brackets, tall thin first floor windows, and a low-pitch hip roof topped with a cupola. The formal balance of the house often is accentuated by pronounced molding and details such as string course and rusticated quoins. A central on-bay porch or long porches are evident in style".

B. Structure

The structure consists of exterior and interior brick bearing walls with 1st and 2nd wood floor joist and beams. The attic /roof is framed, barn-like, with timbers with mortise and tenon, pegged joints along with wood joists.

The structure is in good condition except for the following observations:

1. Garage
The anachronistic garage roof is deflecting and has been reinforced with interior steel columns. This garage, which is not original, could be removed which would require research and restoration to the exposed walls of the original house; structural repair of the roof; demolition and construction of an addition or since the structure is stabilized, do nothing.
2. Attic
Roof decking was observed to have been recently repaired however, white mold appeared to exist. While the attic area is ventilated because of damaged wood soffits, a detail investigation by a specialist should be conducted and corrective action taken to control mold growth. Positive natural ventilation should be provided.
3. Crawl space
The most serious structural issues were observed in the standup areas of the crawl space. The original bearing brick walls and first floor wood framing were modified to accommodate ductwork. An eight inch square common brick pier supporting two steel channels, set flat, is severely deteriorated and out of plumb. The steel is deflecting and rusted. The assembly below the east wall of the kitchen where the deflection can easily be seen at the door head, is in danger of collapse.

A somewhat similar condition exists about six feet south and east where a timber beam has shifted and bearing on only four inches of soft brick.

Since we could not access the remaining crawl space, mold, though unlikely, and other structural issues may exist. The two issues mentioned can easily be corrected. If left unattended will result in structural failure and expensive repair.

C. Exterior

The exterior of the house is in remarkably good condition. While the house was added to over the years, with the exception of the garage, the design integrity has been preserved. With the exception of gutters, rain leaders, front porch decking and wood soffits, all architectural systems are in good to fair condition. Window restoration is preferred to replacement.

D. Interior

The interior is in fair to poor condition. Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning do not exist. New systems will be required along with electrical upgrades and plumbing systems to respond to a reuse design.

The structural issue in the kitchen area has been mentioned. Another may also exist in the southwest living room where a one half inch deflection was observed in the floor at the north wall.

Plaster repair work will be required at wall and ceiling areas.

Base, window and door trim are features of the house along with crown molding. These elements are in good condition and should be preserved. The grand stair to the second floor is in fair condition and in need of repair. The bay windows are also a unique feature of the house.

Past actions to adapt the house economically for apartment use was not as destructive as it could have been. The changes made at that time help to legitimize future reuse actions.

E. Preservation Overview

<u>DO</u>	<u>DON'T</u>
Retain original masonry, stucco & mortar	Apply waterproof or water repellent coatings before professional examination & prescribed treatment
Duplicate old mortar and stucco in composition, color, strength, texture, joint size, method of application & joint profile.	Repoint with mortar of high Portland cement content, joints of a differing size, profile, texture or color.
Clean masonry with the gentlest method possible.	Sandblast brick or stone surfaces.
Repair or replace where necessary, deteriorated material with new material that duplicates the old.	Apply new material which is inappropriate or was unavailable when the building was constructed.
Replace missing architectural features.	Remove original architectural features.
Place antennae and mechanical equipment in an inconspicuous location.	Install "dropped" acoustical ceilings to hide mechanical systems.
Preserve the original roof shape.	Change the original roof shape or add features inappropriate to the character of the original architecture.
Replace deteriorated roof coverings with new material that matches the old in composition, size, shape, color and texture.	Replace deteriorated roof coverings with new materials which differ from the old in composition, size, shape, color and texture.
Retain original window and door openings including window sash glass, lintels, sills, doors, pediments and all hardware.	Introduce new window and door openings into the principal elevations, or enlarge or reduce window or door openings.

Use original doors and door hardware when they can be repaired and reused in place.	Discard original doors and door hardware.
Reconstruct porches and steps which are appropriate to the building and its development.	Enclose porches and steps in a manner that destroy their historic appearance.
Discover original paint colors and finishes.	Repaint with colors that cannot be documented through research and investigation to be appropriate to the building and the neighborhood.
Retain the basic plan of the building, the relationship and size of rooms, corridors and other spaces.	Make unnecessary new additions.
Use contemporary designs for new additions that are compatible with the character of the building.	Imitate an earlier style or period of architecture in new additions.

F. General Observations

1. Establish an archives for data collected on the house. Preserve normal archival material but rescue artifacts as renovation proceeds i.e.; hardware, wallpaper, light fixtures, etc.
2. Design Consideration
 - a. Correct crawl space structural issue immediately.
 - b. Activate the existing crawl space sump pump to prevent spring flooding of low areas.
 - c. Adjust grade around house to deflect water away from foundation and areaways of the house.
 - d. Maintain exterior and roofing integrity.
 - e. Take actions to preserve the Council Oak.
 - f. Consider garage removal actions.
 - g. Maintain curved driveway.
 - h. Reconstruct recessing steps to front porch double doors.
 - i. Ventilate the house to prevent moisture build-up and mold.
 - j. Adapt interior for reuse as house, student apartments (co-op) or office use.
 - k. Have "as-built" drawings prepared of the house i.e.; plans of #1 crawl space, #2 First Floor, #3 Second Floor, #4 Attic, #5 Roof and #6 Cross Section.
 - l. Complete hazz-mat investigation.

G. Standard Building Survey Form (Attached)

The following form was completed on July 25, 2014 by Edward D. Francis, FAIA.

H. Cost Range Estimate

The following cost range estimate is based on an overview of building conditions as recorded in the Standard Building Survey Form, the site visit and a meeting with Brian Mooney, President of INTEGRITY Building Group and Detroit based general contractor who specializes in historic renovation work. The analog for the unit cost range was the recently restored "Greenmead Hill House" in Livonia, Michigan. Due to less work required for exterior rehabilitation, the cost has been slightly reduced. Cost could also be reduced with volunteer work (recommended at the end of the project) and the phasing in part of second floor work.

COST RANGE

SITE DEVELOPMENT (garage demo only)	\$ 5,000		\$ 10,000
BUILDING REHABILITATION	\$ 392,000		\$ 479,000
Low \$ 90/sf x 4,350 sf = \$392,000			
Med \$110/sf x 4,350 sf = \$479,000			
FIXED & MOVEABLE EQUIPMENT	NIC		NIC
<hr/>			
CONSTRUCTION COST	\$ 397,000		\$ 489,000
ADMINISTRATIVE COST (3%)	\$ 12,000		\$ 15,000
PROFESSIONAL FEES (10%)	\$ 40,000		\$ 50,000
CONTINGENCY (10%)	\$ 40,000		\$ 50,000
<hr/>			
COST RANGE	\$ 489,000		\$ 604,000
	\$ 500,000	SAY	\$ 600,000

STANDARD BUILDING SURVEY FORM

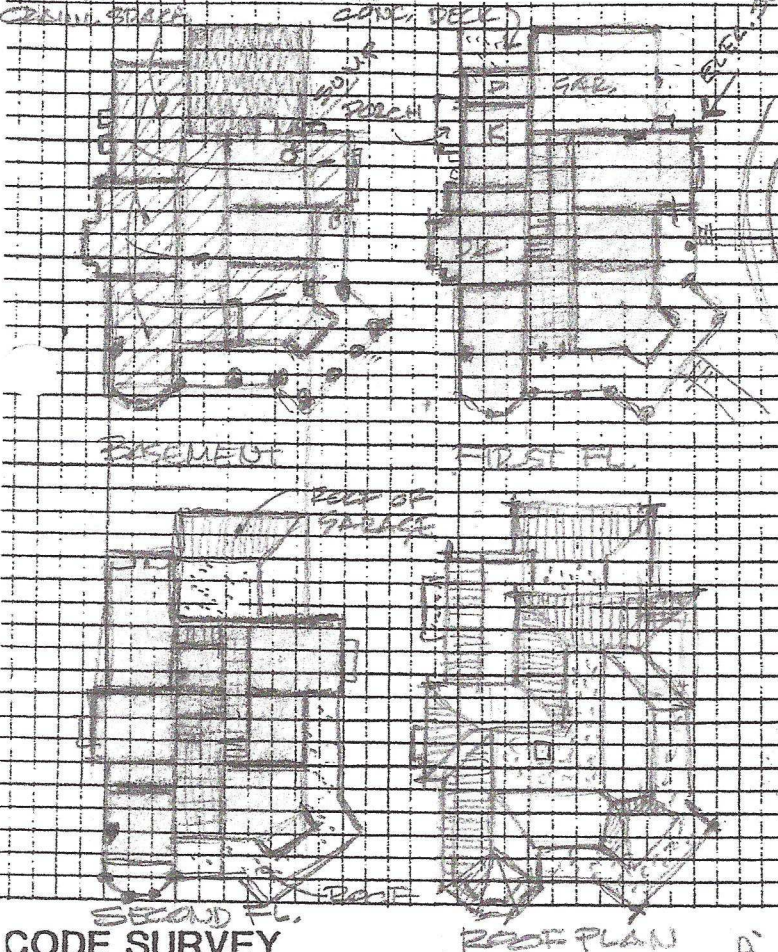
BUILDING DATA COMPLETED 7/25/14

EDD

EXTERIOR ANALYSIS

ADDRESS	501 W. WILLIAMS ST. OWASSO MI
EXISTING NAME	LYON-SELMILLER HOUSE
ORIGINAL NAME	GILBERT LYON
BUILDING DATA	
NO OF STORIES	CRAWL SPACE, 1ST & 2ND
PLAN DIMENSIONS	ROUGHLY 70' X 46'
GROSS SQ FT	4,350 ± SF + 525 SF GARAGE
GROSS CU FT	60,000 CF ±
% OCCUPIED	UNOCCUPIED FOR 40+ YEARS
BUILDING AGE	CIRCA 1860
FLR TO FLR HT	11' ±
STRUCT SYSTEM	BRICK BEARING W/ WD FLS & ROOF
BAY SPACING	INTERNAL BEARING WALLS
SQ FT / FLOOR	BASEMT 250 SF, 1ST FL. 2,100 SF 2ND FL 2,000

STRUCTURE	P	F	G	NOTES
FOUNDATION				FIELD STONE
WALLS/W/DOORS				BRICK BEARING
ROOF				WD / POOL @ GARAGE
SYSTEMS				TIMBER ATTIC W/ MAT JOINT
ROOFING				
CHIMNEYS				BRICK REBUILT
GUTTERS/DNSPOUTS				(A) ALUM. SOFFITS POOL
CORNICE				
MASONRY				FIELD STONE @ BAY
WOOD TRIM				SOME (A)
PORCH SKIRTING				
WIN FRM/SASH				DOUBLE HUNG
GLAZING				
DOORS				① FRONT ENTRY ② SIDE ENTRY
ENTRY				① DRS
PORCH/STEPS				① STONE (M) RECENT ② INST. STAIR
FINISHES				
DECORATION				BRACES + BALCONY
DECORATIVE WINDOW				END OF 2ND FL. HALL
SOFFITS				
AWNINGS				NONE
INTELS				
SKIN MATERIAL				STUCCO; BRICK @ EAST BAY
STUCCO PAINT				
PORCH SOFFIT				BEAD BD. UNPAINTED



INTERIOR ANALYSIS

STEEL LINTELS SAGGINS

STRUCTURE	P	F	G	NOTES
WALLS (BRICK)				2" SAG @ KIT. CENTER WALL
FLOORS (WOOD)				2" SAG @ KIT. CENTER WALL
COLUMNS (TIMBER)				CRAWL SPACE BK. WALLS
BEAMS (TIMBER)				INTERIOR BK. BEARING WALLS
SYSTEMS				
FLOORS				1/2" SAG @ NORTH WALL
CEILINGS				PLASTER
WALLS (PLASTER)				SETTLEMENT IN KIT.
SPECIAL FEATURES				DR. TRIM, CROWN MOULDINGS
DECORATIVE ART				POSSIBLE PAINT
WINDOWS				
DOORS				FIREPLACES
SPECIAL FINISHES				BAY WINDOWS & BALCONY
HVAC				DECORATIVE GRILLS
CERAMIC TILE				YELLOW & BLACK
ELECTRICAL				
PLUMBING				BASEMENT SUMP
ATTIC (TIMBER)				MOLD & WD DECKING
STARWAYS (WIDE)				GRAND STAIR + SERVANT
HALLS				1ST & 2ND FLS
EXITS				POOR @ BASEMT, SERVANT STAIR CLOSED
HARDWARE				
KIT. CAB.				
PAINT				

CODE SURVEY

SYSTEMS	NO	YES	NOTES
STANDPIPE			
SPRINKLER			
EXIT STAIRS 2ND FL.			2ND STAIR STEEP & CLOSED
FIRE SEPARATION			
FIRE ALARM SYSTEM			
FRIER FREE			
EMERGENCY LTG			
EXIT STAIR BASEMT			TRAP DR. & STEEP STAIR

LOWER STAIR ENCLOSED, TR. & STAIRS

NOTE: ASBESTOS TILE IN KIT.

KEY

- CONFORMING
- NON-CONFORMING
- ORIGINAL
- ANACHRONISTIC
- MISSING

NOTE: 1ST & 2ND FL WINDOWS TO WEST OF CORNER BAY MAY HAVE BEEN BRICKED IN & STUCCO MAY HAVE BEEN APPLIED TO ORIGINAL BRICK AS PROTECTION OR THE STUCCO PAINTED DARKER OR STUCCO WAS DARKER.