



St. Joseph Church, about 1896

Bartlett History Museum Progress Report Newsletter Supplement

January 2020

Our project to save, renovate and open our Bartlett history museum in the former St. Joseph Church building is moving forward thanks to your help and generosity. In the past three months, we've achieved some significant milestones. Rather than squeezing all of this news into the newsletter, we decided to add this Progress Report supplement to explain what we are doing and where we are going. The important point here is that your donations have helped make this all possible. We thank you for your continued support.

In this Progress Report, we'll cover the following topics::

- ⇒ The Purchase of the Building
- ⇒ Completion of the Hazardous Materials Removal
- ⇒ Preparing the Building for Winter
- ⇒ Next Steps in 2020.



Future Bartlett History Museum
Today

If you have any questions concerning this project, please send a note to our President, Phil Franklin at Phil@BartlettHistory.org.

The Purchase of the Building

On November 5, 2019, Phil Franklin, President of the Bartlett Historical Society, and Nancy Kelemen, Chair of the Bartlett School District, signed the documents selling the St. Joseph Church building and property to the historical society — sale price — \$1.00!

Taking ownership of the building is a major step to saving this historic building and opening our museum. Aside from being our museum, the building will also be an artifact itself in our collection.



Phil Franklin passing the \$1.00 to Nancy Kelemen at the closing

The story behind the sale goes back to November 2018 when Phil presented a proposal to the Bartlett School Board for the historical society to purchase the building. In March 2019, the school board asked the voters for their permission to sell the building to BHS. The voters overwhelmingly approved. With that approval, we started the formal discussions to purchase the building. After several months of wading through legal wording and documents, we created the final papers for the sale.

What makes ownership of the building better than having a long term lease? As we continued to seek funding from individuals and foundations (grants), we realized that ownership of the building was important. Why?

- ◆ Highest Level of Commitment: Ownership of the building demonstrates our highest level of commitment to the project and acceptance of responsibility for the long term care of the building in the name of the members of the Bartlett Historical Society. We hope this commitment will allay any concerns people might have about the project and encourage them to feel more confident in donating to the renovation.
- ◆ Security for the Investment: While we had a 25 year lease on the property, it didn't provide the long term security to protect our investment in the building. Ownership brings that security.

Now that we own the building, we can proudly point to it saying that this is where the historical society is making an even bigger contribution to the cultural future of Bartlett. We are truly living up to the first part of our mission by preserving and protecting this historical asset in Bartlett's history. When we are an active museum, we will use it to expand the educational portion of our mission.

Completion of the Hazardous Material Removal

In late September 2019, we contracted with Acadia Contractors from Turner, ME. They specialize in hazardous waste removal and demolition. Their charge was to remove all of the hazardous materials from the building (i.e. asbestos, lead paint, mold) and remove all of the crumbling plaster, wet insulation and left over debris from the basement. The process for the removal of this material was expensive as there are special dumping permits needed, specialized equipment needed to contain things such as asbestos fibers and specialized licenses needed by the firm for handling this material. If there's one thing we learned from this, when someone uses the word "special" the price tag starts to rise quickly. Setting the price aside, we knew that this work was essential and a big first step to allowing anyone else into the building.

Before Acadia started work, the first thing that hit you when you walked into the foyer was the strong smell of mold. Then, people noticed the floor seemed a bit soft. Actually the base floor was hard as a rock but the plywood under the carpeting had delaminated giving the Disney-like illusion that the floor was rotten and you were falling into the basement. Inside the building, paint was peeling everywhere, sections of plaster were falling without assistance, mold graced the walls and, after a rain storm, there was water on the floor as our roof is quite porous.

After Acadia completed their work, the building smells like fresh wood, the frame is exposed and we have a clean, safe building. Even the basement has been cleaned. We found some surprises when the walls were opened. We found the priest's apartment, three window frames that were covered over, a hatchway that was likely the original access to the basement and a "No Parking" sign that one of our prankster forefathers tucked into a bay between two studs. We've included some before and after photos to show the difference between September and now. We were very pleased with the work done by Acadia.

To show the difference in the building from before Acadia did their work and as it is right now, here are some before and after photographs of the interior.



View of the front altar area from the choir loft, before demolition (l); after demolition (r)

Notice the single arch frame in the right hand photo and the wood that framed the three arches hanging off the single arch—the single arch was the original configuration of the church. We will preserve that single arch in our museum.

The sacristy was to the right of the altar; a passage to the back exit was to the left.



View of the church entry from the altar on the left and a slightly different angle on the right. We are planning to keep the choir loft in place. We needed to remove the confessional during the demolition. Notice the window frame that was covered in the wall in post demolition photo. There's an identical one frame behind the stairway to the choir loft. It's not known when they were covered.



View of the south side wall and ceiling (right side of church) showing heavy water damage in the photo above and on the left; above photo shows area where plaster fell from ceiling; left shows peeling paint and deteriorating plaster.

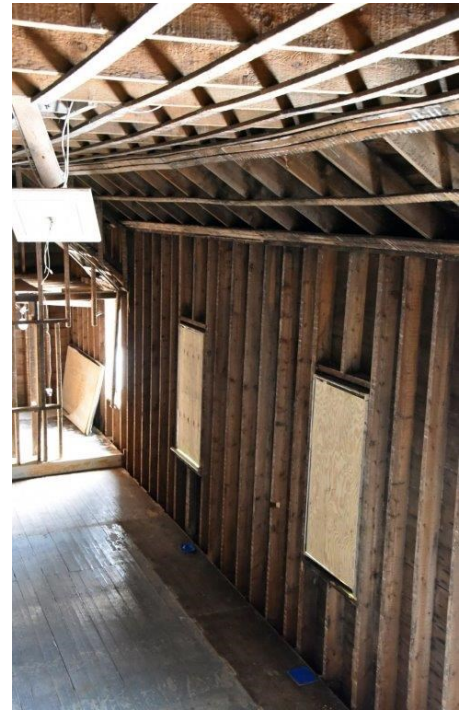
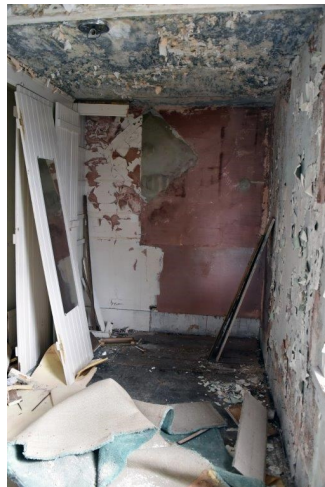


Photo on right is post demolition view. Unfortunately, all of the wainscoting needed to be removed but plans are to replace it in the museum



View of Sacristy (l two), ceiling covered in mold, the lower cabinet was saved. Sacristy during cleaning (r); the diamond on the wall was once a window that was closed and covered over

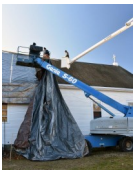
Preparing the Building for Winter

The next step in the process of renovating the building was to do some stabilization work on the frame of the building, replacing rotten wood and then, the big job, replacing the entire roof structure. Looking at the frame after Acadia left, we found virtually no rotten wood! We have identified the need for some replacement of columns in the basement but all-in-all, the building is in good shape. Yes, the north and south walls are bowed out but that will be fixed when we replace the roof.

With the risk of removing the roof just before snow season (remember, winter here in the mountains can start at Halloween), and time working against us, we made the decision to adjust our initial plan of replacing the roof this year and delay that work until the spring 2020.

Still, we needed to prepare the building for winter and protect it from the elements. This protection came in two steps.

Tarpaulins Over the Roof: To stop the water infiltration through the roof and let the frame dry, we



Tarps being installed

installed heavy duty tarps over the entire roof. Our General Contractor, Bill Duggan and his crew with a big assist from Sean Lorway, owner of Emerald Tree Experts in Bartlett completed the work. Bill, along with Sean, volunteered their time and equipment for the job, saving us several hundred dollars in expenses that we can use for other parts of the renovation. *We greatly appreciate their generosity.* A couple of days after the tarps were installed, we received our first snow of the winter!



Emerald Tree Experts logo

Cabling in the Building: To arrest the outward spreading of the north and south walls and give the building an assist for the winter, Bill Duggan and crew installed four thick steel cables with turnbuckles connecting those walls. They are in place just to hold the building as-is and prevent further expansion from the anticipated weight of snow on the roof. When the roof structure is removed in the spring, we will use these cables and turnbuckles to straighten the walls. Once the new roof is in place, we'll remove the cables as the roof trusses will be holding the walls in place.

Next Steps in 2020

Over the winter months, we will be working to raise the additional funds needed to complete this renovation project. We have the funds to replace the roof and complete Phase 1, saving the building. If we have sufficient funding to continue with Phase 2 of the project in the spring, we will move forward with the work to complete the renovation. So, over this winter, we are searching for:

- ◆ Foundations who are willing to grant money to this historic building preservation project
- ◆ Additional individual donors who are willing to support this effort; many of our current campaign donors, BHS members and non-member donors, have made multiple contributions to this project. Support from all of our donors is greatly appreciated. We will continue to look for people willing to add their name to our roll of donors who have invested their personal money in this project
- ◆ Opportunities to spread the word about the project through appearances at promotional activities.

What are we up against in our fund raising efforts? The simple but complex answer to this is "competition." In the Mount Washington Valley, there are any number of non-profit organizations seeking funding assistance to sustain operations as well as taking on major projects. Where we have received grants, the awards have been reduced from our original requested amount. Also, other grants have, unfortunately, denied. Foundations are looking to help as many organizations as possible as they field numerous requests for support. In talking with decision makers on foundation boards, they struggle as the number of worthy grant applications grows every year. Foundation funding is limited. Hard decisions need to be made and, unfortunately, we often have lost in the competition for funds. With that reality staring us in the face, we are still taking a positive approach to the search for funding and will continue to ask for support.

If you have any questions on this project or know someone who you think would be interested in supporting our effort, please contact Phil Franklin, BHS President, at Phil@BartlettHistory.org.