

Fire Engineering®

Construction Concerns: Repurposed Structures

Article by Gregory Havel

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During the life of a building, it will have a number of owners, occupants, and uses. Each change of owner, occupant, and use is likely to result in modifications to the structure. The following is a history of one 125-year-old building.

Photo 1 shows a structure that was built in 1889 to house the Burlington Village Hall, the Burlington Town Hall, and the Village fire department. The exterior and interior walls were hollow tile (terra-cotta) and the exterior was faced with brick. The building had a full basement with walls of fieldstone. The first floor was made of concrete and ceramic tile supported by iron beams and columns embedded in concrete. The second floor was also of concrete (except for the section over the fire station apparatus bay, which has a wood plank floor), but supported by iron columns that were originally enclosed with terra cotta tile. Village and town offices were located on the first floor (on the right and center of photo 1). The assembly hall was located on the second floor. The fire department was located at the left on the first floor (the pair of arched door openings). The gabled attic was used for storage. The building also included the constable's office and a jail cell. The iron fire bell tower at the rear of the building was added in the mid-1890s. The public library moved onto the second floor in 1913.

July 9, 2015



(1) Photo courtesy of the Burlington (WI) Fire Department archives.

The Village of Burlington grew rapidly because of industry and service by two railroads and, in 1900, was incorporated as a city. By 1925, the building no longer met the needs of the city. In 1921, the fire department was provided with new quarters at the new waterworks building a few blocks away to the northwest. The city hall, offices, and public library were relocated to a new building a block away to the south in 1926. The town hall was moved to another location.

The building in photo 1 was sold to the Masonic lodge in 1925, who then sold it to Joseph Bazal in 1926 to become the Bazal Creamery and Dairy Store.

This transition from city hall and fire department to a creamery included extensive modifications to the building, shown in photo 2 in 2015:

- The gabled roof and attic were removed and replaced with a flat roof with a parapet.
- The iron fire bell tower was removed.
- Several rooms on the first floor were converted into walk-in refrigerators and freezers insulated with asphalt-impregnated cork.
- The window on the first floor on the curved corner was replaced by a new main entrance, with plate-glass display windows on either side. The former main entrance (on the right in photo 1) was replaced by a display window.
- The fire apparatus bay doors were closed, one being replaced by a side entrance and the other by a display window. The patched brickwork is visible in these areas in photos 2 and 3.
- An addition was constructed at the rear of the building as large as the original building. Photo 3 shows the patched brick around the new side entrance and

July 9, 2015

display windows that replaced the apparatus doors. It also shows that the second floor windows in the original building had curved brick arches at the top, while those in the addition had flat arches.

- In Photo 3, note the vertical control joint in the brick masonry just to the right of the single window on the left, which shows the line at which the addition (on the left) was joined to the original building (on the right).



(2, 3) Photos by author.

Joseph Bazal sold the creamery to Eugene and Elmer Weber in 1949; Bazal retired in 1950. The business was moved to another location in 1951.

Since 1951, the building has housed a variety of businesses and offices including a liquor and cheese store, a candy store, and a liquor store. In the 1960s and early 1970s, the building housed The Think Shop bookstore (my employer while in high school) and a laundromat on the first floor and a dental laboratory on the second floor in 1965; (<http://www.burlingtonhistory.org/Albums/Businesses%20of%20Burlington/album/index.html>). A teacher resource business, another bookstore, a drapery shop, and other businesses occupied the building later. Since 1987, it has been occupied by a beauty salon on the first floor, and other businesses on the second floor.

Each change of occupant or owner has resulted in remodeling and renovation, installation of new or upgraded utilities, creation of new openings in walls and floors, and closing of unused openings in walls and floors.



THE THINK SHOP, SOUTHEAST CORNER OF PINE AND WASHINGTON STREETS - JUNE 1965

(4) Photo courtesy of the Burlington Historical Society.

Each type of occupancy also has its own specific hazards. For instance, the hazards of a village hall and library (places of assembly) will differ from those of a dairy, liquor store, book store, laundromat, and other businesses. Each change of occupant or owner results in changes in the fire load and life load in the building as well as changing the behavior of a fire in the structure, if one were to occur. This suggests that preincident plans must be revisited regularly and, especially, after a change in occupant or one.

RESEARCH:

July 9, 2015

Photos taken Tuesday evening May 26, 2015 and Thursday afternoon May 28, 2015

Building type:

From Sanborn Maps Web sites:

The Library of Congress collection of Sanborn Maps, including a detailed explanation of the colors, abbreviations, and symbols: <http://www.loc.gov/collections/sanborn-maps/about-this-collection>.

Sanborn's Web site: <http://www.sanborn.com>.

Wisconsin Historical Society collection of Sanborn maps:
<http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Content.aspx?dsNav=N:4294963828-4294963805&dsRecordDetails=R:CS3350>

Wisconsin Historical Society search page for Sanborn maps:
<http://content.wisconsinhistory.org/cdm/search/collection/maps/searchterm/sanborn/field/all/mode/all/conn/and/cosuppress/0>

The collection has the Sanborn Maps of Burlington, Wisconsin, from 1887, 1892, 1898, 1904, 1909, and 1920.

According to the Sanborn Maps from the Wisconsin Historical Society on-line collection:

- 1887: The lot had several small wood frame buildings fronting on Pine St.
- 1892: The Town Hall was there, with the Hose Company in the rear; and the back half of the lot vacant
- 1898: Town Hall in front; hose company in the rear; the iron bell tower in place; and 3 other wood frame buildings between it and the alley
- 1904: Town Hall in front; Fire station in rear, with 1 H&L truck; 2 hose carts; 1500 feet of 2.5" hose; and the iron bell tower and wood frame buildings at the rear at the alley
- 1909: same as 1904
- 1920: same as 1904, except for the fire station: 1 H&L truck, 1 hose cart, 1500 feet of 2.5" hose, and an auto.comb. hose & chemical truck
- 1929: shown as "Basal Creamery", with the addition to the rear, including a boiler room at the CD corner. Prior to this map, the peaked roof was removed (shown on previous Sanborn Maps). Heat: steam; Lights and power: electric. Concrete floors 1 & 2; concrete columns 1st floor; IR columns 2nd floor. Exterior walls tile (terra-cotta) faced with brick. Interior walls tile.

From the "History of Burlington," by the Burlington Historical Society, Chapter 5; combined with notes from the Sanborn Maps; and notes from the "History of the Burlington Fire Department":

1. The first fire hose company was organized in 1877, with a foreman and a 20-man company.
2. The first hook-and-ladder company was organized in 1878, with 35 members.
3. By 1879, there were 80 members between the two companies.
4. Burlington was incorporated as a Village in 1886, with 1,744 residents.

July 9, 2015

5. Village Hall was built on the corner of Pine and Washington in 1889. This replaced the old church/town hall on Perkins Blvd & Jefferson Street (Cross Lutheran, presently Burlington Historical Society museum). The Village Hall also housed the fire department, constable, and a jail cell.
6. The Burlington Artesian and Water Company was organized in April 1889 with a well on the north side of Pine Street (Commerce Street) near Mill Street. Water was found at 1,008 feet; a waterworks was built at the site; a water tower was built on Lewis Street; and the water was turned on August 18, 1890.
7. The fire department was reorganized in 1890 after the waterworks opened. One thousand feet of hose was purchased to supplement the 300 feet on hand, and a \$100 fire bell was purchased for the village hall belfry. A building on Liberty (now State) Street on the Hillside near McHenry Street was leased to house equipment (Hook & Ladder) at that end of town.
8. By 1898, the iron bell tower had been built east of the city hall (Sanborn Map).
9. Burlington incorporated as a City on February 27, 1900, with a population of 2,256.
10. A fire alarm system was installed, with alarm boxes in each ward, in 1907. This was in use until the mid-1960s. The location of the fire was broadcast by the box number, using the steam whistle at the waterworks.
11. Between Sanborn Maps dated 1920 and 1929, the fire department moved to the new waterworks building on Pine (Commerce) Street in 1925 and city hall moved to a new building at Pine and Jefferson (city hall and courtroom on second floor and the public library and police department on the first floor). In 1964, the public library was moved across Pine Street to the former post office building; and some city offices moved downstairs. In the late 1960s, a new police station and courtroom were built north of the city hall, at Jefferson and Dodge. On the 1929 Sanborn Map, the former City Hall building had a large addition and was labeled "Bazal Creamery"
12. In 1945, the Burlington Area Rescue Squad was formed by the Rotary Club, and used space in the fire station beginning in 1946.
13. Future uses of the building included a library, a chocolate factory, a creamery, a book store, a laundromat, a drapery shop, a dental laboratory, and hair styling salon.
14. In the mid- and late-1960s, the front part of the building held the Think Shop (bookstore) and Handmade Gifts by Marcie. The rear two-thirds of the first floor contained a laundromat. The second floor was Popp Dental Laboratories. The basement was vacant.
15. In 1969, the new fire station at 100 Washington Street was completed and the fire department and rescue squads was relocated, leaving the former waterworks building vacant.
16. Present uses of the building (May 2015) include Trendsetters Hair and Nail Salon on the first floor; and a business (Synchronicity) and apartments on the second floor. The basement is mostly vacant storage from Trendsetters.

From Burlington Historical Society Web site

<http://www.burlingtonhistory.org/Articles/Then%20&%20Now%2001%20Chestnut%20&%20Pine.htm>

CITY AND TOWN HALL AND TREND SETTERS - 1905 -2010

Sitting on a corner of a block that was originally intended as a city park, the building currently occupied by Trend Setters on the southeast corner of Pine and Washington Streets (see 2010 photo) has gone through considerable change over the years.

July 9, 2015

When Silas Peck filed his original plat of Burlington with the county clerk's office in 1839, he designated the block bounded by Pine, Washington, Dodge, and Jefferson streets as a public square. The square remained undeveloped and, at Peck's death in 1864, became part of his estate. Peck's son, William, then began selling off lots in the block. In 1865, Herman Thiele, who had a hardware business in the next block north on Pine Street, bought the corner lot, built a frame building, and started a tin shop.

The frame building later housed a cigar maker and tobacco store, a general fur store, and a tailor. In 1888 the town and village of Burlington bought the corner from then-owner Charles B. Wagner and put up the large brick building with the peaked roofs and the corner tower shown in the 1905 photo. The building, which included an engine room for fire equipment, was used as the town and village (and later city) hall. The public library also moved into the building's second floor in 1913.

The building served as the fire station until 1921, when the fire department moved north on Pine Street to a building near Mill Street, and as the town hall until 1924, when the city bought the town's interest and the town offices moved a block west to the corner of Washington and what is now North Perkins Boulevard. In 1925, the city traded the building and property (plus \$3,000) to Albert J. Tichlofen for the property on the corner of Pine and Jefferson Streets, where the city intended to build a new city hall. The city offices and library remained in the building until 1926, when they were moved to the newly built (and current - 2011) city hall building.

After the 1925 trade, Tichlofen sold the property to be vacated by the city to the Masonic lodge, which bought it as a possible site for its temple. When those plans changed, the Masonic lodge sold the former city and town hall building and property in 1926 to Joseph Bazal, who had a creamery in the building on Washington Street that currently houses a laundromat. Bazal removed the peaked roofs and corner tower, razed the fire tower, built additions on both wings of the building, and remodeled the building into a creamery and retail dairy store. He offered to donate the fire bell and tower to Rochester, but it did not accept them because of the expense that would have been involved in moving them.

Bazal sold an interest in the creamery to Eugene and Elmer Weber in 1949, when the photo showing the creamery was taken. Bazal retired in 1950, and the Weber brothers moved the business to the corner of Pine and State Streets in 1951. Since then, the building has housed a variety of businesses and offices, including William Popp's dental laboratory, Dr. John Consoer's laundromat, Jean McReady's The Think Shop book store, Wegge's Liquor and Cheese Mart, Sliker's Liquor Store, Alcove Bookshop, the Candy Kitchen, Teacher Place, Heritage Draperies, and others. Trend Setters beauty salon has occupied the building since 1987.

Retrieved from Historical Society:

Photo of Bazal Creamery from 1930s or 1940s.

July 9, 2015



Gregory Havel is a member of the Town of Burlington (WI) Fire Department; retired deputy chief and training officer; and a 30-year veteran of the fire service. He is a Wisconsin-certified fire instructor II, fire officer II, and fire inspector; an adjunct instructor in fire service programs at Gateway Technical College; and safety director for Scherrer Construction Co., Inc. Havel has a bachelor's degree from St. Norbert College; has more than 30 years of experience in facilities management and building construction; and has presented classes at FDIC.

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