

ADOLPH BIERMANN HOUSE

HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT



February 2011

Cover: *Gate House – Mayowood*
Courtesy History Center of Olmsted County

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PREPARED FOR ROLMSTED COUNTY, MINNESOTA

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The authors would like to dedicate this work to the memory of Olmsted County Commissioner Mike Podulke. His love of history and dedication to the people of Olmsted County, as well as his leadership in the preservation of Olmsted County's built environment, will leave an enduring legacy.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Study Summary	3
Aerial View of Biemann Property	6
Project Data	7
Part 1: Developmental History	
A. Historical background and context	10
B. Chronology of development and Use	31
C. Physical description	36
D. Evaluation of significance	53
1. Mayo wood estate	
2. The evolution of Minnesota agriculture	
3. Patterns of development in early Southeast Minnesota	
E. Condition assessment	56
Part 2: Treatment and Work Recommendations	
A. Historic Preservation Objectives	67
B. Requirements for Work	67
C. Work Recommendations and Alternatives	67
Selected Bibliography	75
References	80
<i>Surveys and Maps</i>	
Original survey of Minnesota township, 1854	9
1868 plat map of Rochester Township	13
1878 plat map of Rochester Township	15
1896 plat map of Rochester Township	20
1914 plat map of Rochester Township	24
<i>Biemann house floor plans</i>	
Lower Level	70
Main level	71
Upper level	72



Figure 1. Front of the Biemann house, from lower level driveway (see lower level floor plan for photo vantage point).

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this report is to provide a framework for understanding the historic functions and current significance of the Adolph Biermann house, as well as to begin to explore the possibilities for its restoration and eventual reuse. To this end, it will first outline the site's development and ownership history within the context of historic events, and evaluate its significance. The house's structure, as well as the materials and methods of its construction and its current condition, will be documented with photographs and measured drawings. Finally, considering all of this information, recommendations will be offered for preservation and reuse of the site.

The scope of such recommendations and plans will be focused on an immediate concern with safeguarding and stabilizing the building until longer-term preservation objectives have been formulated and funds to achieve them are available. By temporarily slowing the property's deterioration, their implementation should allow for the creation of a sustainable, larger strategy for its maintenance and preservation. With careful planning, this nearly 150-year-old home will continue to be available for interpretation, study and enjoyment for many years to come. ■

STUDY SUMMARY

The Adolph Biemann house is the oldest documented structure in the Mayo wood Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982, and is also among the oldest structures in Olmsted County. Once the residence of a succession of farm families, including two with ties to local and state government, the house was acquired by Dr. Charles H. Mayo in 1907 and became the start of his 3,300 acre Mayo wood estate.

The site was used in various ways by three generations of the Mayo family, most notably as the residence of Mrs. Charles W. Mayo's parents. While living in the house, Mrs. Mayo's father managed Mayo wood's farms for many years and his wife became its longest-term resident. As more recent generations of the family have divested themselves of property and broken up the estate, however, the Biemann house has fallen upon harder times. The house was sub-divided into two residential rental units and has weathered several decades of leasing to medical residents and other young professionals.

Olmsted County acquired the property in 1979, with the intention of integrating it into a planned recreation area that was never realized, and leased it to the History Center of Olmsted County in 1991. Under the History Center's management, the house reverted to single-family use by becoming its Executive Director's residence. Since a catastrophic plumbing failure in 1999, however, the house has been unoccupied and without a plan to ensure its future.

This report is an effort to take a first step in that direction. By documenting the building's history, examining the contexts in which it was used, surveying its structural features and current condition, and making recommendations for its conservation and restoration, this work hopes to be a guide towards responsible decisions about the Biemann house's management and use.

Historical Summary

Over its approximately 150 year history, the red brick structure at the entrance to the Mayo wood estate has been owned and used by figures significant to Olmsted County and Minnesota history, as well as the international history of modern medicine. The history of its ownership and modes of use is revealing of many movements of regional political, social, and economic history—from trends in immigration and settlement to the evolution of farming practices, as well as the progression of popular taste, changing standards of comfort and propriety, and numerous other aspects of ordinary life.

Importantly, until the last era of its history, the house was used for similar purposes by a succession of dissimilar people. Beginning with the site's settlement in 1854 and ending approximately with the deaths of Chuck and Alice Mayo in the late 1960s, it was consistently associated with the business of agriculture. The house is believed to have been constructed in the mid-1860s by an entrepreneurial farmer from New York named John FitzJerole Harmon. During his twenty-year

ownership of the site, punctuated by several attempts to divest himself of the property by selling it to others who ultimately could not afford it, it became an established farmstead that specialized in the cultivation of wheat.

Under the management of Adolph Biemann, the Norwegian immigrant who eventually acquired the farm, it became a more diversified business. Although John Harmon also was an elected official in Olmsted County, Biemann's primary ambitions seemingly were political. After three terms as County Auditor beginning in 1874, he repeatedly sought higher public office until being appointed tax collector for the state and later winning the office of State Auditor. Biemann, a bachelor, spent a substantial part of his time in the state capital pursuing his political career and shared his Rochester Township farmhouse with various farm families. These people seemingly worked his fields and tended his home while he, in turn, managed operations and marketed the farm's products.

Dr. Charles H. Mayo acquired Biemann's farm in 1907 and used the site as a family retreat until making a permanent move to the country in the 1920s. The Mayos are believed to have used the Biemann house before their estate, Mayo wood, was developed, but its primary role under the Mayo ownership was as a residence for household staff and, later, the farm's manager. Through its association with Mayo wood, and the progressive farming methods Dr. Mayo practiced there, the Biemann house also can be associated with the scientific agriculture that typifies the modern era. Mayo wood's operations showed a concern for soil and wildlife conservation, reforestation, "green" energy systems, recycling, and other environmental issues that are now of interest to farmers, rural landowners, and concerned citizens everywhere.

Architectural Summary

The two-and-a-half story, red brick house consists of a primary structure that is presumed to be original, an attached brick entry tower that is believed to have been constructed by Adolph Biemann to provide himself with a private entry and sleeping quarters, and several other additions that were constructed when the house was remodeled by the Mayos. These consist of a single stall garage that connects to the interior rooms of the lower level and a two-story porch addition that connects to the lower levels at the rear of the house. The roof of the garage addition is incorporated in a front terrace.

Areas of deteriorating exterior brickwork have created some problems. Although masonry cracks and a trim separation in the front gable indicate the probability of structural movement, it is possible that this is not recent activity. Some further evidence of shifting is evident at the outer corner of the lower level bedroom ceiling, which dips slightly, and a crack in the living room ceiling that also may have been caused by the addition of a wall above it.

The house's interior consists of corner rooms with central circulation halls and stairs. Subsequent to Adolph Biemann's addition of the front entry tower, the

Mayo family made significant modifications to the interior plan. Many of these occurred during the 1930s and the 1960s, when an internal stairway to the upstairs tower room was closed or removed and several doorways were closed. Kitchens on both first and second floors date from a remodeling project in the 1970s that sub-divided the house into two rental units.

The electrical system was upgraded during the 1970s to prepare for the house's use as a rental property. But systems throughout the house have not been operational since the 1999 plumbing failure. The house is not secure and shows some evidence of infestation by pests. Apart from these problems, and arguably because of them, the condition of the plaster walls and painted finishes is inconsistent, with some very distressed areas.

Recommendations for Treatment and Use

The primary objective of this study is to explore and document the house's structure and current condition, as well as its history and significance. The immediate preservation planning goals for the building are to stabilize and preserve it until subsequent phases can address long-term needs.

The first step to protect the building from further harm is to seal the building against water infiltration by replacing all roofing, rebuilding the cellar's roof structure and repairing windows and doors. Similarly, reliable locks and a security system should be installed when possible.

The second level of priority is to address the building's structural integrity by monitoring existing cracks, regaining climate control inside the house, and repairing masonry damage. Once these tasks have been accomplished, and preservation objectives are well defined, a plan for other repairs can be formulated and code and accessibility issues associated with reuse can be addressed. Although schematic design is not part of this report, diagrams proposing such improvements and locations for structural reinforcement have been included to guide the next potential steps of restoration.

As a final consideration, the report cites the desirability of soil and hydrogeological research in the Mayo wood Historic District, as well as the need for future work to restore its "dragon tooth" stone walls. In addition, it stresses the importance of further architectural and archaeological investigation of structures like the Biemann house's spring house and the stone barn in the Ivy Lodge complex that may relate to the early development of this historic site. ■

AERIAL VIEW OF THE BIERMANN HOUSE SITE



Aerial photo of the Biermann house, the Ivy Lodge complex, and the Mayowood residence, 2010. Olmsted County property records.

PROJECT DATA

Historic names: Harmon farmhouse, Adolph Biemann residence, Chester and Lillie Plank home, Mayo wood gate house

Current names: The Adolph Biemann house, Mayo wood Gate House, Red Brick House

Address: 3730 Mayo wood Road SW, Rochester, MN 55902

Location: Three miles southwest of downtown Rochester

Proposed treatment: Preservation/restoration

Owner: Olmsted County

Operator: History Center of Olmsted County

Management agreement: Leased to the HCO C until 2016

Zoning district: R-2

Land classification: Exempt

UTM coordinates: 15N 538470 4871298

National Register of Historic Places: The Adolph Biemann house is a contributing member of the nationally-significant Mayo wood Historic District, listed in the National Register of Historic Places on March 31, 1982.

Landmark Status: No

Contemporary related studies:

■ *Mayo wood Business Plan.* Rochester, MN: Olmsted County Historical Society, 2002.

■ *Mayo wood Historic Structures Report Prepared for the Olmsted County Historical Society.* Rochester, MN: Hammel, Green and Abrahamson, 2000.

■ Neckar, Lance and Carole Zellie. *Mayo wood: A History and Plan for Conservation and Reconstruction.* St. Paul, MN: Landscape Research, 2002.

CULTURAL RESOURCE DATA

Date of construction: ca. 1865

Periods of significance: The primary period of significance corresponds to the era in which it served as a working farmhouse, which extends between the date of its construction and its sale to the Mayo family (ca. 1865–1907) and includes the time of the Mayo wood Farms manager's occupancy (ca. 1932–1956). A secondary period of significance begins with the acquisition of the property by Dr. Charles H. Mayo in 1907 and concludes in about 1969, when the house ceased to be occupied by Mayo family members.

Architect/builder: unknown

Historic District Period of Significance: The 1982 National Register nomination lists the 1870s, 1911 and the 1920s as periods of significance. This, presumably, is meant to indicate construction dates for the earliest structures in the district (the Biemann site) and the primary Mayo wood residence, as well as the occupancy period of the Charles H. Mayo family. Given the current understanding of the District's history, these dates are: 1860s, 1911, and 1920s–1939.

FUNDS INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT

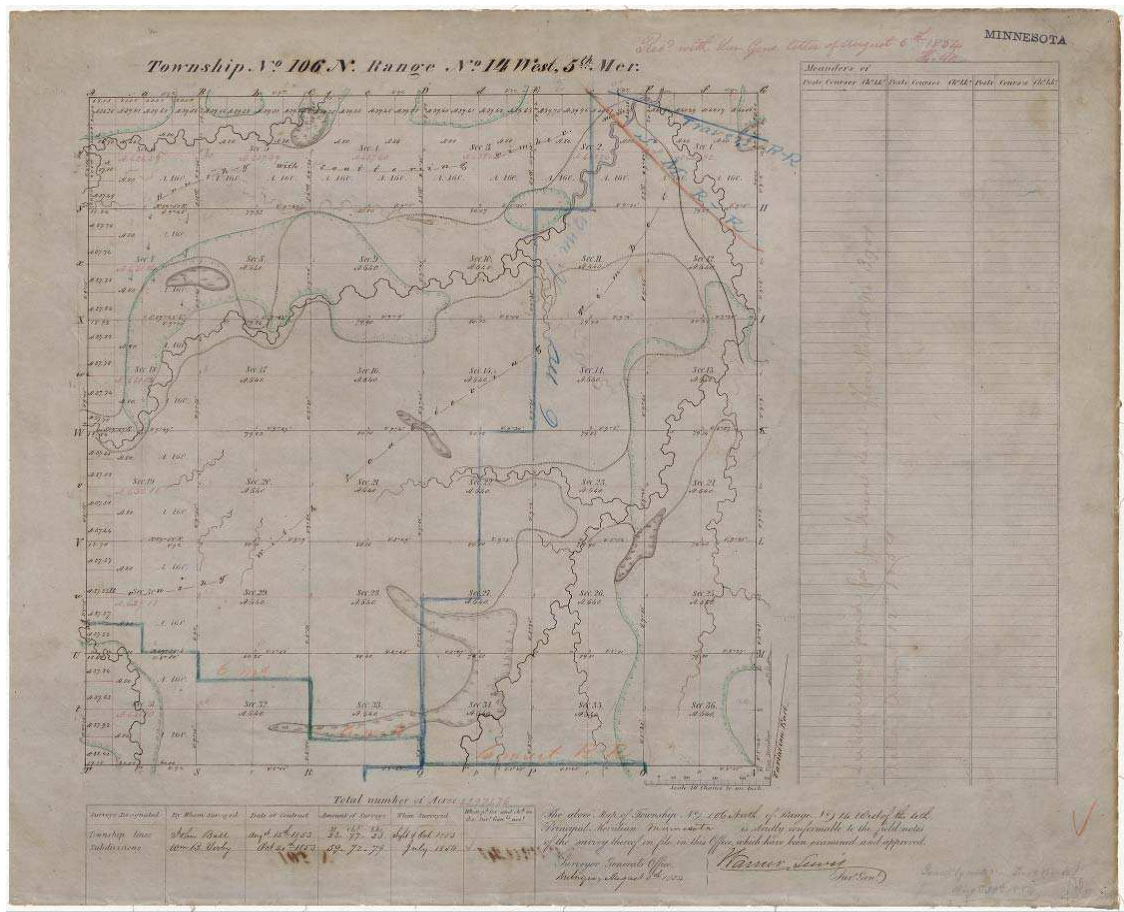
This project has been partially financed with funds provided by the voter-approved Clean Water, Land, and Legacy Amendment, passed on November 4, 2008 by the citizens of the State of Minnesota.

Blue Planet Museum Consulting, LLC, has generously donated research and writing time for the preparation of this report.

The Friends of Mayo wood Residence & Historic Sites Board of Directors has also donated time for the development of a grant proposal and for project management by Stevenson Williams, a member of the organization's Board of Directors.

CREDITS

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Original survey of Minnesota township 106N, range number 14 west, Fifth Meridian, conducted in 1854. U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office Records, document 111051.

PART 1: DEVELOPMENTAL HISTORY

A. Historical Background and Context

The house at 3730 Mayo wood Road SW in Rochester, Minnesota, is now variously known as the “Adolph Biermann House,” the “Mayo wood Gate House,” or, simply, the “Red Brick House.” Understanding of its history has faded, with most of the thousands of passers-by who have seen it over the last century being unaware of its early occupants, or the roles and routines of the ir daily lives.

Although the house has always been used primarily as a dwelling, the number of people living and working at this location, as well as their occupations, social status, and relationship to each other, has changed substantially over time. The following account will situate the property within the prevailing conditions that distinguish the succeeding periods of its use and outline a chronology of the property’s ownership and occupancy, beginning with the earliest records of the site.

Early Land Policies and Minnesota Settlement

The building’s location is tied to some of Minnesota’s oldest history. Originally part of the territory ceded to the U.S. government by the Dakota tribe at Traverse des Sioux in 1851, just two years after Minnesota Territory was formed, it was initially surveyed by the U. S. General Land Office in July of 1854.

A government survey was the first official step in the re-distribution of land and the establishment of political and administrative entities recognized by the American government. Then the sale or conveyance of surveyed “public domain” land could legally be achieved through public auctions, private cash purchases, government warrants to military veterans, and homestead and timber culture entries. There was an active secondary market for land—and abundant opportunity for speculative investment in real estate—in Southern Minnesota during the decade surrounding Minnesota statehood, when settlers from Eastern states flocked to the fertile, and well-advertised, lands west of the Mississippi.

The future Biermann house site was identified by the 1854 survey as the eastern half of the southeast quadrant of Section 8 of Township 106 North (later Rochester Township), Range 14 west of the fifth Prime Meridian. Within a few years, under the Scrip Warrant Act of 1855, a warrant for this parcel—together with the southeast quarter of the northeast quadrant of Section 8 and the northeast quarter of the northeast quadrant of Section 17, a total of 160 acres—was awarded to Abiezer Purinton, a farmer in Maine, in recognition of his service



Portrait of the Williams family, c a. 1880. Top: Taliesin, Michael, and William Williams; Bottom: Mary Elizabeth, John, Hannah, and David Williams. Courtesy of Guy Williams

in the War of 1812. According to General Land Office records, Purinton subsequently assigned the warrant to Hannah Williamson on June 7, 1859, for an undisclosed price. Williams then was awarded a patent for the site and was recognized as its first legal owner.¹

Early Olmsted County histories tell a more colorful backstory. The 1883 *History of Olmsted County* recounts that Hannah Williams's son, William Williams, at the age of fifteen, left his newly widowed Welsh mother and siblings in Iowa in 1853 to seek his fortune. He eventually happened upon the present site of Rochester and helped to build Head's Tavern, one of Olmsted County's first structures. For several years he continued to work for George Head, another early rival who is credited with Rochester's founding, and "pre-empted" a homestead near the present Federal Medical Center in southeast Rochester by constructing a cabin on the site and declaring his intention to settle there.

Under the law of the time, this was the quickest way to land ownership. By constructing even a rudimentary shelter and filing an intention to purchase at the local land office, a pre-emptor earned the right to purchase land for as little as \$1.25 an acre when it was offered for sale. Beginning in 1854, when William Williams was settling in Minnesota, even unsurveyed land could be acquired this way. But William was soon robbed of his cabin by an unscrupulous acquaintance who filed a claim on the land after learning that William was a minor. Undaunted, he re-established himself near the present Biermann house,

built a new cabin, and was joined by the rest of his family in the spring of 1855.² His mother would then have been able to take the claim along the rest of the pathway towards legal ownership.

When the Williams family reached Rochester, the settlement consisted of only five cabins near what is now the downtown intersection of South Broadway and Fourth Street. Three Indian camps were located within the present city limits, bringing the native population to three or four hundred, and both bear and deer were abundant. During their first year, the family cultivated enough of their wooded homestead to grow potatoes and buckwheat for their own use. Many years later, William's brother Taliesin would recount that it was difficult to find a mill to process the buckwheat. After trying unsuccessfully in Preston, about forty miles away, the family was forced to drive to Decorah, Iowa (then a three-week trip), to have their crop ground.³

This was an era when thousands of would-be settlers were streaming into Minnesota, building cabins and staking claims faster than it could be surveyed and offered for sale. Between Minnesota Territory's 1849 formation and the 1855 Minnesota census, there was almost a tenfold increase in settlers, from about 4,500 to 40,000 non-native inhabitants, and more than 240,000 were thought to have established themselves by 1857. The liberalization of land acquisition policy was one step towards making settlement easier, but the fact remains that demand exceeded supply and, thus, there were excellent opportunities to sell recently-purchased land at a profit. The Williams family took advantage of this, selling their parcel of 160 acres to a Stephen Van R. Harris of Freeport, Illinois, in August of 1856 and purchasing another property in Rochester Township.⁴ Perhaps unfortunately for Harris, the value of his investment was likely diminished when the Panic of 1857 took hold of the nation the following September. Harris held onto the land, possibly waiting for the real estate market to rebound, and likely rented it to a Township farmer until the right opportunity to sell presented itself in 1860. ■

Farming as a Speculative Investment

On May 19, 1860, in his hometown of Freeport, Harris signed a deed transferring ownership of the eastern half of the southeast quadrant of Section 8 (the portion of the Williams homestead that lay in section 8) to John FitzJermole Harmon, in consideration of \$1,000. He also conveyed adjoining plots to both north and south (the Section 17 portion of the Williams homestead—plus another quarter quadrant to the south and the entire southeastern quadrant of Section 17, as well as the southeastern quarter of the northeastern quarter of section 8) and six other properties elsewhere in the county to Harmon's daughter Helen, all also in exchange for \$1,000. This gave the Harmon family control of approximately 400 acres centering on the old Williams farm, as well as about 450 acres nearby. These deeds were filed in Olmsted County on July 4 of that year.⁵



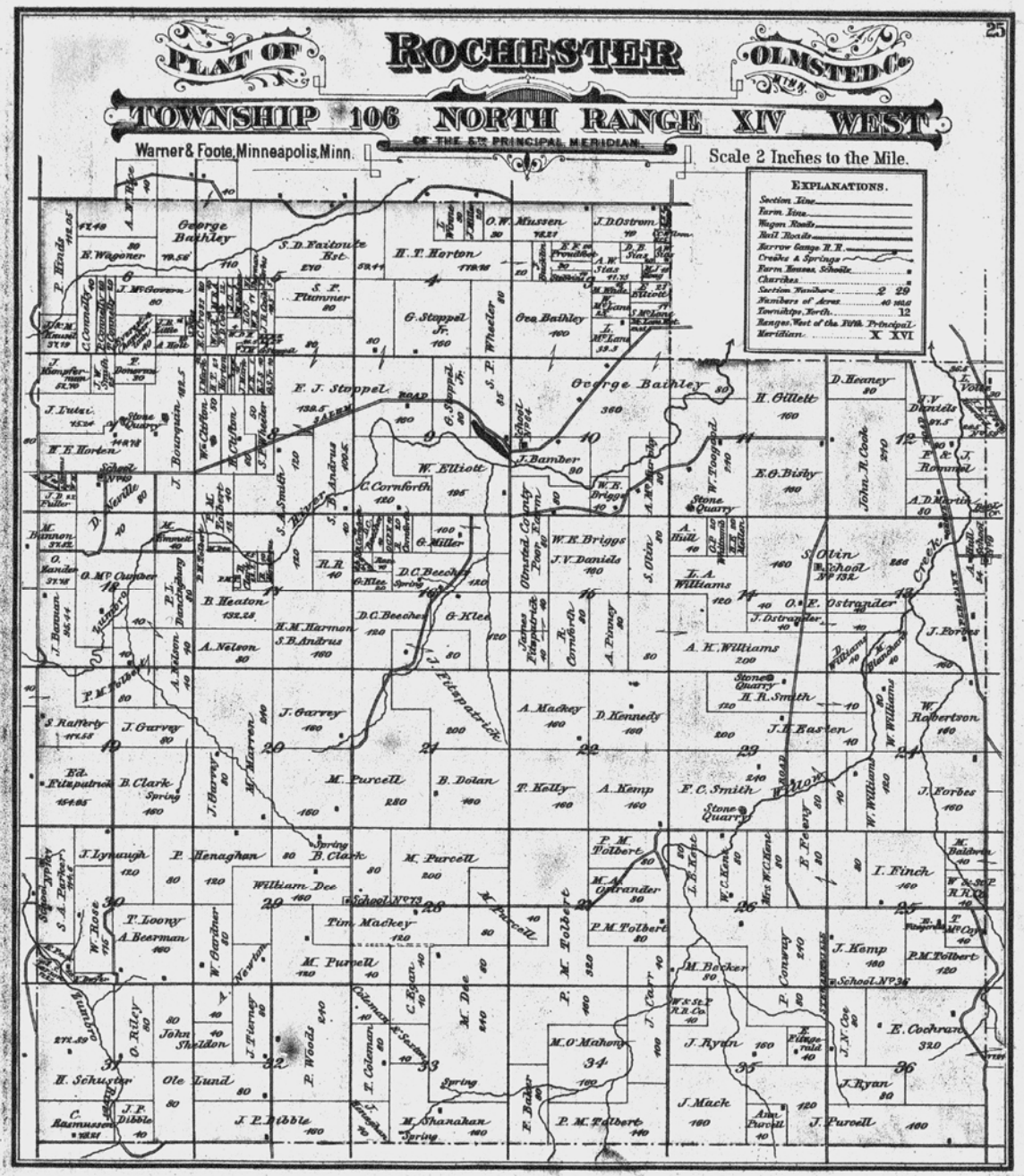
1868 plat map of Rochester Township. Bennett and Smith, Olmsted County Plat Map (1868).

The Harmons—John, wife Eunice Bailey Harmon, and daughter Helen—were part of a large, well-connected family in New York's upstate Onondaga County. At this point, it is not clear when, or where, they first lived on the Williams farm site in Rochester Township. Olmsted County histories indicate that John was elected chair of the Township's board of supervisors in 1862, four years after both it and the County were organized, implying that he was living in the township by that year and that he had been there long enough to earn a favorable reputation. He served as Justice of the Peace from 1865 to 1869, and again as chair of the Township board in 1867.⁶

The 1868 Olmsted County plat book shows two dwellings, side by side, in the southeast corner of the 100.5 acre tract in the extreme southeast corner of Rochester Township's section 8, on the 100.5 acre property owned by J. F. J. Harmon.⁷ Just to the south is a 240-acre tract owned by Helen M. Harmon, which has no dwelling indicated. By this time, the part of Helen Harmon's northern quarter quadrant that lay north of Salem Road had been sold to neighbor Nancy Baker. The succeeding plat book, published in 1878, documents the removal of the dwelling to the west, on the banks of the Zumbro, and the existence of one on the site of the present "Biermann" house.

It is tempting to believe that the removed structure on the river bank was the cabin originally occupied by the Williams family, and this may be. But a large number of the old settler's cabins, built dangerously close to banks of Bear Creek and the Zumbro, were swept away in a catastrophic flood in the summer of 1857.⁸ Hannah Williams had sold the property to Stephen Harris by this time and, presuming her family was not farming the land under a separate agreement, had already moved on. Whether or not the Williams cabin survived the flood, the dwelling indicated on the 1868 plat map would likely have been used by tenant farmers or the Harmons before the later house was built. Given the consistent presence of the other dwelling on succeeding plat maps, it is also plausible that it is the house still standing at the site.

Information about the Harmons' lives and livelihoods is rather sparse, and the family's whereabouts at the time of the 1860 census is somewhat unclear. Both a John Herman and a Helen S. Harmon are listed as residents of Onondaga County, New York, near the residences of other members of the J. F. J. Harmon family. It certainly is possible that these are John Harmon and Helen M. Harmon, but it also is possible that the Harmons were in transit to Minnesota, where they filed their deed in July of that year.⁹ Both the federal census of 1870 and the 1875 Minnesota census record John Harmon living with wife Eunice and daughter Helen in the vicinity of Rochester.¹⁰ The family is at the Rochester Township location in 1875 but, tellingly, is reported as living in the city of Rochester's first ward in 1870, with John Harmon's occupation being listed as "farmer."



1878 plat map of Rochester Township. George E. Warner and C. M. Foote, Plat Book of Olmsted County, Minnesota (Philadelphia: Warner & Foote, 1878).

On December 10, 1869, Olmsted County recorded a deed dated February 23, conveying ownership of the eastern half of the southeast quarter of Section 8 and the eastern half of the northeastern quarter of section 17 in Rochester Township to Nancy Baker, owner of the farm immediately north of the Harmon property, across Salem Road.¹¹ Baker took out a mortgage for \$12,500, payable to John and Helen Harmon in two years, but released it and conveyed the deed back to John Harmon less than a year later. This would have been the period of the Harmons' residence in the city of Rochester; by the time the 1875 Minnesota census was taken, they were enumerated with their neighbors on the farms of Rochester Township.

The Harmons made another attempt to sell their farm again on September 15, 1877, this time to a County resident named Sylvester B. Andrus. Like the Harmons, Sylvester and his wife, Harriet, as well as their five children, hailed from upstate New York and were recognized as descendants of early pioneers in that state. By the time they contracted to buy the Harmons' farm, they had been in Olmsted County for almost a year—likely farming in Marion Township, where Sylvester's father also had settled at that time and where the family later returned to live.

The sale price was \$15,000—payable in bushels of wheat, grown on the property and delivered to a local grain elevator over a period of at least seven years.¹² These terms certainly imply that John Harmon had established wheat fields on the property, and that Andrus also was prepared to engage in wheat farming.

One of the factors that drove Rochester's popularity as a destination for settlement and a focal point of speculative land investment was its reputation for rich soil and abundant rainfall. Land dealers and local promoters distributed brochures in eastern states and some European cities touting the virtues of the region's soil and climate, its vigorous crop yields, the abundance of its educational and religious institutions, the strength of its economy, and the values to be had in local real estate.¹³ While the county's early settlers—like the Williams family—had grown a mix of subsistence crops, the construction of flour mills in the early 1860s and the arrival of the Winona and St. Peter railroad in 1864 changed this. By providing a faster way for perishable goods to reach markets, it created a possibility for local farmers to produce cash crops that could be sold or traded for necessities, or, if the farmer was lucky enough, sold to produce revenue for further investment.

"King Wheat" reigned in Minnesota during the 1860s, and Rochester reflected this by becoming a regional milling center. Frederick Olds's flour mill—the largest in the state in 1860—was soon joined by a four-story mill financed by The Boston Company (later known as Zumbro Falls Mill), as well as the Cascade Mill. Wheat prices tripled between 1861 and 1866, but as other commodity prices also rose, inflation took its toll. Farmers borrowed against crop yields to make ends meet or to finance the acquisition of more land and some, perhaps like Nancy Baker, weren't able to make ends meet.



Sylvester Andrus and an unknown child, ca. 1880.
Courtesy of Wendy McNight.

The predominance of wheat farming led to soil exhaustion by the early 1870s, and four consecutive seasons of grasshopper plagues further diminished harvests. While 1877 was reportedly a good year, the following year's blight, followed by another plague of insects, created more mortgage defaults. As farmers lost their lands, many gave up and left for the next frontier, which by this time was across the Red River in Dakota Territory.

This, seemingly, was the fate of Sylvester Andrus, who did not fulfill his contract to purchase the Harmon farm. By 1880, the family had re-established itself in Marion Township on a farmstead that subsequently became the Olmsted County Poor Farm and remained there until Sylvester's father, then the oldest resident of Olmsted County, died in 1883. Still in the pioneer spirit, they continued westward to homestead in Dickey County, North Dakota, where they would remain until Sylvester's death in 1895.¹⁴ Sylvester was a life-long farmer, raising both crops and livestock, and also worked as a carpenter. His children lived at home until marriage, tending the farm and helping their disabled mother keep house.¹⁵ By this time, the Harmons had moved, once again, into the city of Rochester and were living in the city's first ward when the 1880 census was taken on June 1.

Both of the elder Harmons were about 70 years old, Helen was 44, and John was still identified as a farmer. On October 26 and 29 of that year, Olmsted County recorded a mortgage and a deed indicating that the Harmons had sold the

farmstead in Section 8, along with Helen's land in the northeast quarter of the northeast quadrant of Section 17, to High Forest Township resident Adolph Biermann. Biermann took out a mortgage with the Harmons, promising the delivery of 10,000 bushels of first-quality wheat, or the equivalent in lower grades.¹⁶ The Harmons assigned this mortgage to a third party in early September, 1881, whereupon they moved to Pettis County, Missouri, and lived out the remainder of their lives. ■



*Harriet Andrus, c a . 1890.
Courte sy of Wendy Mc Night.*

Adolph Biemann: Immigrant Farmer and Career Politician

Biemann would have been a well-known man in Olmsted County by the time he bought the Harmon farm. A Norwegian immigrant, he had come to the United States in 1862 and immediately enlisted in the Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry to serve three years in the Civil War. He moved to Olmsted County in 1866, working for seven years as a bookkeeper and running unsuccessfully for Registrar of Deeds in 1872 before winning a bid for County Auditor two years later. He served three terms in that office before purchasing the Harmon's property.



Adolph Biemann, c a .
1885. History Center of
Olmsted County.



1896 plat map of Rochester Township. Standard Atlas of Olmsted County, Minnesota (Chicago: George A. Ogle, 1896).

By 1882, he was nominated as the Democratic candidate for Congress in a strongly Republican district. The race was close, with Biermann losing by fewer than 600 votes. The following year, he received the Democratic nomination for Governor and made a strong, though still unsuccessful, showing. He ran for Congress again in 1884, with an outcome similar to his previous attempt. Then, in 1885, Biermann was appointed collector of internal revenue for the state of Minnesota under President Grover Cleveland and served in that office for several years. Following this, in 1890, he was elected to the office of State Auditor and served in that capacity for four years before again being defeated in the next election. In 1895, he finally retired from public life.

Between 1885 and 1895, Biermann certainly spent much of his time away from the farm, tending to his responsibilities in St. Paul. St. Paul city directories list local residences for him during this decade, and the Minnesota and U. S. censuses give at least some idea of what was happening at his home in Olmsted County. Beginning at least as early as 1875, Biermann had been living with a family named Olson who may have been related to him through his mother, Anne Olson.¹⁷ Although the 1880 U.S. census indicates that the Olsons were farming in Cascade Township while Biermann remained in Rochester, they were again living with him on the Harmon farm by the summer of 1885, before he began his position as tax collector.

Biermann's position at the end of the list of household members reported in that year's census implies that the enumerator considered Mr. Olson to be the head of this household.¹⁸ It does seem likely that the Olsons were more involved in daily farm work than Biermann was, especially during his most politically active years. However, Biermann's account book for 1899–1911 shows that he was then fully engaged in the commercial affairs of the farm, at least, and that he had developed it into a far more diverse enterprise than the Harmons' or the Andrus' wheat fields. Under Biermann's management, the farm also was marketing oats, barley, flax, corn, hay, eggs, and dairy products.¹⁹

After Mrs. Olson died in March of 1886, her family left the Biermann farm and dispersed. By the next available census, in 1895, Andrew and Anny Rasmussen were living in Biermann's house with six farm workers, while Biermann was enumerated in a St. Paul boarding house. His reported occupation was "none." Andrew Rasmussen is also given as the principal occupant of the house on the 1896 plat map.

Biermann adopted two of the Olsons' children, Ella and Carl, and subsequently returned to his farm in Rochester Township. Both he and Carl, by then eighteen, were living there when the U.S. census was taken in the summer of 1900—along with Bjorn and Sophia Brandt, their son John, and Sophia's brother. Perhaps reflecting an arrangement something like the one between Biermann and the Olsons, both Biermanns are listed as boarders.

Within a few years, Carl had married Jessie Graham and accepted a position at the University of Minnesota agricultural school in St. Paul, leaving Biermann on the

farm. As the adopted daughter of Joseph Graham, another prominent Rochester Township farmer, Jessie Biermann was a sister to early Mayo Clinic partner Dr. Christopher Graham and to Edith Graham Mayo, wife of Dr. Charles H. Mayo. Perhaps at least in part because of the Biermanns' new family connection to the Grahams and the Mayos, "Biermann's grove" reportedly became a popular picnic destination for Rochester's young social elite.²⁰ ■



*Jessie Graham, ca. 1905.
History Center of Olmsted
County.*

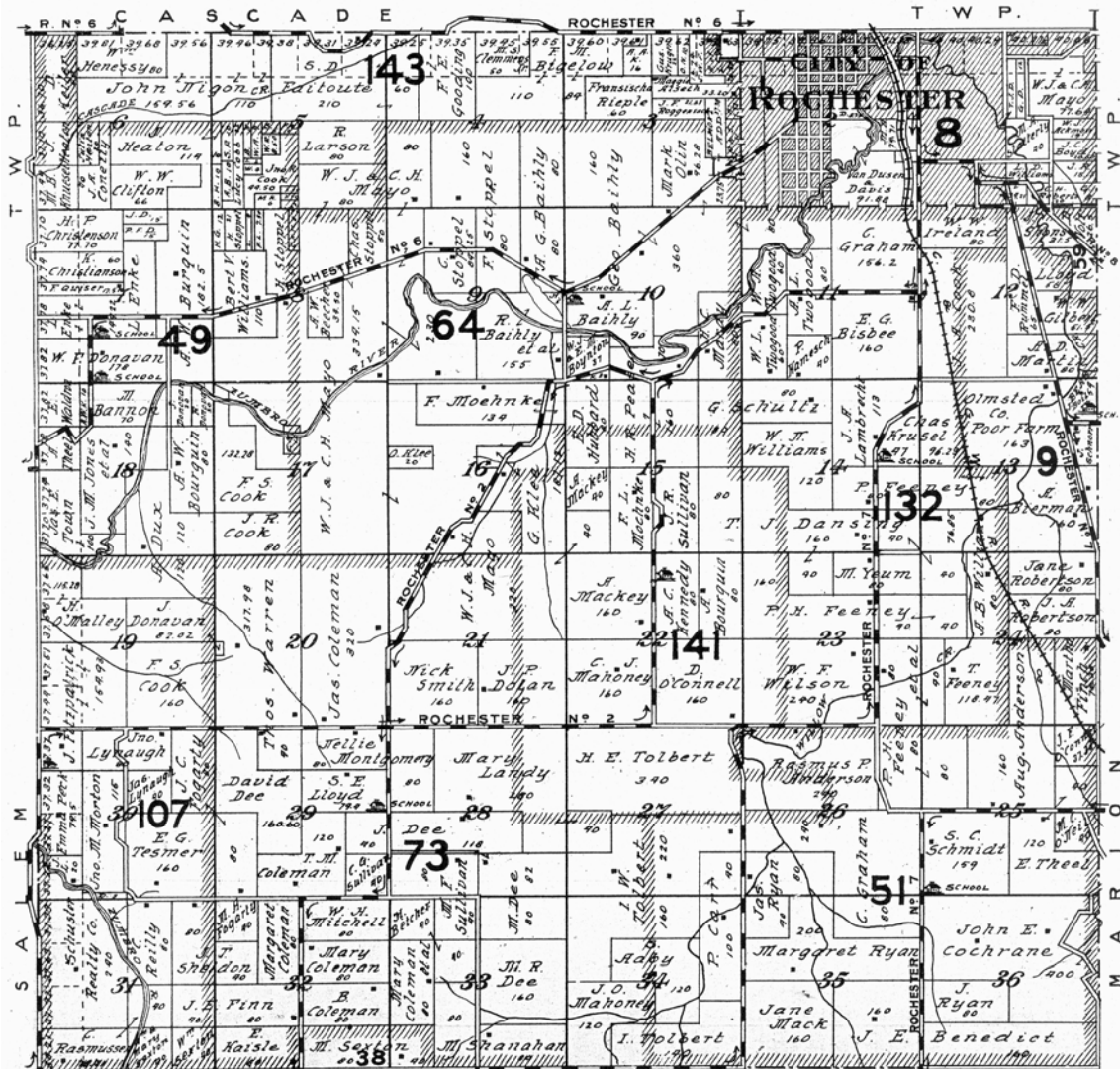
The Genesis of Mayowood

On April 26, 1907, Biemann sold his farm to Drs. William J. and Charles H. Mayo for \$20,000. By then, the property was comprised of about 340 acres, or most of section 8 south of County Road 8 and about two-thirds of section 17, just to the south. When the transaction closed that fall, Biemann moved east, to a smaller farm in section 13 of Rochester Township southeast of Christopher Graham's farm. He lived there until his death in 1914, along with Carl, Jessie, and their infant son Carleton.

Reportedly, the Mayo brothers originally intended to establish a summer residence on the farmstead.²¹ This was a time when Will and Charlie Mayo lived in adjacent residences on College (now Fourth) Street, held a joint checking account, and had been sharing a lakeside vacation home near the town of Oranoco, about twelve miles north of Rochester.²² Eventually, the brothers discovered separate passions—Will's for river cruising and Charlie's for nature and agricultural pursuits—and this family retreat was donated to Rochester's Sisters of St. Francis, a Franciscan order that had developed a close relationship with the Mayos through their work to establish and maintain Rochester's St. Mary's hospital. The Rochester Township farmland whose ownership was attributed to both brothers on the 1914 Olmsted County plat map became the foundation for Charlie's Mayowood Farms, which eventually comprised about 3,300 acres.



*"Biemann's grove," c.a. 1905.
History Center of Olmsted County.*



1914 plat map of Rochester Township. Atlas and Farmer Directory of Olmsted County, Minnesota (St. Paul: Webb Publishing, 1914).

Charlie Mayo's family, at least, began to enjoy some of this property as early as 1900. Perhaps they were among the picnickers at "Biermann's grove," especially given the relationship between Mrs. Mayo and Jessie Biermann, but the family famously preferred a private spot under a large oak tree that would have been south of the Biermann home. This ultimately was to become the focal point around which the Mayo's country residence would be built, allowing Dr. Charlie to build a new lifestyle as a gentleman farmer.

After the purchase of Adolph Biermann's farm, his house would have been available for the family's use. Anecdotal accounts assert that the Mayos lived in the Biermann house when they first stayed on the property, before building a weekend retreat they called "the Ivy Cottage" and later constructing "the Big House," which became their main residence during the 1920s.²³

As Charlie Mayo indulged his taste for innovation, first in the design of his home and then in experimental farming methods that reflected his interest in conservation and public health, he developed what would become a model farm. Constructed by local contractor Garfield Schwartz, who also built early Mayo Clinic buildings and homes for many of the Clinic's leading physicians, Mayo wood's main residence is one of the few historically significant homes in the Midwest to make extensive use of concrete and included the area's first air cooling system, a central vacuum cleaner, hydroelectric power and solar water heating. The home's design was based on a technique Dr. Charlie had developed that allowed for the creation of an insulating airspace between interior and exterior walls. Once Schwartz was persuaded to try building a concrete structure, which was to be reinforced with old farm implements, he needed to buy the largest cement mixer ever seen in Rochester.²⁴

Based on his management of Mayo wood Farms, Dr. Charlie also is credited with advancing both agriculture and public health in Olmsted County. Especially since medicine, not farming, was Dr. Charlie's primary livelihood, he hired farm managers to oversee the farms and crews of workers to staff some of his operations, such as the greenhouses, stables and dairy. The 1930 census shows many such people living in the vicinity of Mayo wood. The farms, themselves, were worked by resident farm families—who raised dairy cattle from the Mayo Holstein, Guernsey, and Brown Swiss herds in exchange for half of the milk produced.²⁵

Dr. Charlie put his dairy operations to good use in the service of science by demonstrating—contrary to many local farmers' assertions—that clean, disease-free milk could be produced economically. As Rochester's public health officer, he stood up to city officials and regional milk distributors by successfully lobbying for mandatory milk inspections, sanitary handling practices and pasteurization. After promoting an ordinance requiring regular municipal garbage collection, he tested the possibility of using sanitized food waste to feed his purebred hogs and soon proved that this practice could be both practical and profitable.



George and Harriet Lifko, with son Leonard in George's arms and (from left to right) children Raymond, Helen and Mildred, c a. 1917. History Center of Olmsted County.

Dr. Charlie's other abiding interests were in animal husbandry, wild life conservation, and horticulture—all of which were fed by his life style at Mayo wood. In addition to dairy cattle and pigs, he raised horses, kept exotic poultry, and established a game preserve that housed various species. He planted thousands of trees on the estate, hoping to prevent erosion, improve soil and air quality, and increase wildlife habitat. As well, he built a large commercial greenhouse to raise more than 165 varieties of chrysanthemums, reusing glass X-ray plates in its roof, and devoted himself to the creation of a spectacular landscape on the hillside below his home and on islands in the 80-acre lake he had formed by damming the nearby Zumbro River. The house soon became a local landmark, featured on colored postcards sent around the country by Mayo Clinic patients, and was visited by heads of state and other celebrities who were Mayo Clinic patients as well as recipients of the Mayo family's personal hospitality.

Under Dr. Charlie's ownership, the Biermann house became a residence for some of Mayo wood's domestic staff. Among these may have been George Lifto, who worked for Dr. Charlie as an engineer and was photographed in front of the house with his family in about 1917.²⁶ The 1930 census shows eight adults and four children living in the house. Of the adults, all but the wife of the household head, who was the Mayo's caretaker, were Mayo household workers.²⁷ ■

Adapting to the Modern Era

Following Dr. Charlie's 1939 death, his son Charles, popularly known as "Dr. Chuck" Mayo and also a Mayo Clinic physician, inherited the Mayo wood estate and his father's social role as host to visiting dignitaries on the Clinic's behalf. He and his wife, Alice Plank Mayo, raised six children at Mayo wood and continued to maintain it in much the same way as it had been during Dr. Charlie's lifetime, although changing economic and social conditions diminished the scale of its operations. Edith Mayo lived for four years after her husband's death, but chose to move from the family residence and devote herself to family and charitable activity at Ivy Lodge, another Mayo wood residence. A sewing group she started there during this period later became the Zumbro Valley branch of the Red Cross.

Somewhere around this time, Alice Mayo's parents, Chester and Lillie Plank, who had moved to Mayo wood from Pennsylvania with their daughter, moved into the Biermann house. Chester Plank, a career "butter and egg man," subsequently took over the management of Mayo wood Farms under Dr. Chuck's ownership and fulfilled this responsibility until the mid-1950s.²⁸



*Aerial view of early Mayo wood buildings, c. 1935.
History Center of Olmsted County.*



*The Planks in the living room of the Mayowood residence, ca. 1950.
History Center of Olmsted County.*

Mrs. Plank lived until 1966, after which time Chuck and Alice's son Edward (Ned) moved into the house with his wife Rita and two children. During the years the family lived in the house, a third child was born and Ned and Rita established an antique gallery, which still continues under Rita's management, in the former Mayo wood greenhouse.

In 1963, the Mayo heirs formed a holding company, Mayo wood Enterprises, Ltd., to facilitate the transfer of the family's real estate assets after Chuck and Alice's deaths.²⁹ Alice Mayo died just four years later, and was followed by her husband within a year. Superseding the terms of an earlier will, in which he expressed his desire for Mayo wood to be given to the Minnesota Historical Society and operated as a public museum, Dr. Chuck bequeathed his principal residence, about ten acres of the surrounding landscape, and a trust fund to the Olmsted County Historical Society (now the History Center of Olmsted County). His expressed wish in both documents was to entrust the family residence to the stewardship of one of these institutions so that it could be used as a museum to interpret the lives of the three generations of Mayos that had lived there. The rest of Dr. Chuck's extensive farm properties, including the former Biemann farmhouse, were left to his children. During the same year, Mayo wood was declared a Minnesota Historic Site by an act of the Minnesota Legislature and dedicated as such.³⁰

Mayo wood Enterprises continued to manage the house as a rental property until 1979, when Olmsted County, the present owner of the house, acquired it during the first phase of its Mayo wood Corridor Project. This was a plan to increase the safety of recreational trail users by providing an alternative to vehicular roadways for walking, running, or bicycling.

In 1978, following the approval of state and federal grants to purchase 73 acres downstream from the Mayo wood dam, the County determined that funds were available to purchase the house and amended its grant application to cover seventy-five percent of the house's \$120,000 appraised value. County staff believed that private ownership of a residence in such close proximity to the trail easement and Mayo wood's driveway had the potential to create future difficulties. They foresaw that the house would have value as an interpretive center or a caretaker's residence for the envisioned Mayo wood Corridor Park, or as an interpretive center for the History Center of Olmsted County's Mayo wood tours.³¹ A deciding factor in the decision to purchase the house was a belief that the revenue income it generated, then about \$6,500 per year, was more than adequate to cover existing repair needs (at an estimated cost of \$2,000 to \$2,500), as well as ongoing maintenance.³² The County judged the house, as well as its roof, plumbing, and electrical systems, to be sound and identified relatively minor maintenance issues that could be addressed by its personnel.³³

On October 19, 1979, Mayo wood Enterprises effectively sold the house, along with 1.3 acres of the land upon which it stood, to Olmsted County for \$120,000. About half of the \$222,200 purchase price for this parcel and the 73 acres planned for parkland was borne by the County, with state and federal grant

funds making up the remainder.³⁴ When subsequent opposition by residents west of Mayo wood Dam halted the park's development, the County abandoned the second and third phases of its plan, which would have included the purchase of another 200 acres of land upstream of the dam. It subsequently fulfilled its primary objective of improving access to recreational trails by trading a 12-acre parcel of the newly purchased 73 acres back to Mayo wood Enterprises in exchange for 19 wooded acres that could connect to the City of Rochester's trail system.

The County has continued to own the property primarily because of an understanding that, under the terms of the grants that funded its purchase, the site must be used for outdoor recreation and cannot be sold or transferred unless it is replaced by a similar property of equal recreational value, and this only with the prior written consent of the granting authorities. Pending the development of a more compelling plan, the County Parks Department continued to maintain the house as a two-unit residential rental property, generating \$7,020 per year, until early 1991.

Given the suitability of the property to the History Center of Olmsted County's mission, and the fact that its intended use as an interpretive center for Mayo wood Corridor Park had not been realized, the County entered into a 25-year lease with the Historical Society on March 12, 1991. This allowed the History Center to use the property for its own purposes in exchange for keeping it in good repair, insuring it and paying any taxes or assessments against it, as well as \$1.00 in rent. The lease also allowed the History Center to make improvements and alterations to the property—as long as these preserved the historic character of the property, were consistent with the terms of the Minnesota State Planning Agency Outdoor Recreation Project grants used to purchase it, and were in compliance with local, state and federal regulations.

Although the Historical Society used the property to house its Executive Director until 1999, it has since stood vacant. In 2002, the Society drafted a business plan that outlined long term goals for its holdings in the Mayo wood Historic District. As specified by this plan, the house would be used as a gift shop and visitor orientation center for the Historical Society's Mayo wood tours. To date, this plan has not been realized and the future of the Biermann house, like other elements of the Mayo wood Historic District, is unclear. Especially given that the lease on the house is due to expire in 2016, this report was commissioned by Olmsted County to investigate a possible way forward. ■

B. Chronology of Development and Use

The first known reference to the house now standing at the site is a fire insurance policy Adolph Biemann took out on his farmstead in December of 1880, little more than a month after purchasing it. This describes a “two and one half story, shingle roof brick dwelling, 30 feet by 30 feet,” valued at \$1,700, and a “38 foot by 40 foot and 16 foot [illegible]” with stone base work,” valued at \$800.³⁵ Biemann also referred to the house in a letter presumed to have been written around 1884, which conveys his satisfaction in owning “1,260 acres of land and an elegant mansion in the City,” all mortgaged for \$5,000.³⁶ The short period of time between the property’s purchase and his insuring such substantial structures—as well as the fact that he quickly chose this property as his residence, rather than the other farm properties he already owned—indicate the likelihood that the brick house predates his ownership.

1860–1880: John F. J. Harmon

The belief that the house and, possibly, the nearby spring house were constructed by John FitzJerole Harmon is based upon this historical evidence, as well as the constant presence of a residence at its location on Township plat maps from as early as 1868. The insurance record also confirms that the Harmon family’s residence would have consisted of the 30 foot by 30 foot main portion of the house. The principal entrance, now through the tower, may have been through the now-closed doorway on the west side of the living room or the existing entry to the living room.

Although future investigation of the house’s architectural history may yield new insights, it is reasonable to conjecture that the Harmons’ use of their house was relatively typical for a working farmhouse of their era. Plans from this period typically call for two adjoining common rooms, a living room and a parlor, in the front of the main floor and a pantry to the rear of the house with access to the living room. Also to the rear of the main floor could be one or two bedrooms and, in the smallest of cottages, the kitchen. If there was a lower level, it would contain the kitchen, a wash room, a cellar for food storage, and other utilitarian rooms.³⁷ It is easy to see a correspondence between these historic configurations and the current layout of the main part of the house.

The temporary management of the Harmon property by neighbor Nancy Baker in 1870 and the Andrus family from 1877 to 1880 probably did not result in significant changes to the house’s structure. Baker may not even have used the house during the short duration of her contract with the Harmons, since she and her family lived on an adjoining farm with easy access to the Harmons’ fields. The Andrus family’s residence in the house, on the other hand, is documented in the 1878 Olmsted County plat book. But despite the fact that his family was about twice as large as the Harmons’, with seven members, it seems unlikely that Andrus would have allocated resources to a renovation when he already was having difficulty meeting the terms of his contract to purchase the house. Even

given Mrs. Andrus's reported disability, the house should have been adequate to the family's needs, with the potential for several bedrooms on each of the upper floors.

1880–1907: Adolph Biemann

Adolph Biemann's presumed addition of the front tower would have created relatively private quarters for Biemann and his adopted children, with a separate entrance through the current front door and the stairwell that existed where the closet west of the front entry is now located. The main portion of the house would still have been useable by the Olsons, the Brandts, and even the Rasmusens and the assortment of farmhands who lived with them, as a farm house—much as it had been by the Harmons. Biemann and whichever farm family was occupying the main part of the house would then have been able to communicate—for meals, socializing or housekeeping purposes—via the door that currently leads from the front vestibule into the living room, or the south stairway.

The existence of two distinct living quarters could have been the factor that prompted census takers to interpret Biemann as a paying guest. However, separation from the farm's day-to-day traffic would have allowed him to conduct his business and political affairs with a suitable degree of dignity—and may have lent the house the degree of refinement that prompted him to describe it as “a fine mansion.”

1907–1939: Charles H. (Charlie) Mayo

No documentation has been found to indicate whether the house was modified in any way during the first period of the Mayo family's ownership. Even if they used it casually just after the Biemann farm's purchase, as popular belief would have it, it seems unlikely that Dr. Charlie would have remodeled the house when a more permanent residence would soon be completed.

On the other hand, given Dr. Charlie's meticulous care for his estate, and the fact that Mayo wood staff occupied the house during at least some of the period between 1911 and the early 1930s, the house likely enjoyed regular maintenance, at least. In addition, since Dr. Charlie was actively experimenting with power generation at his dam on the Zumbro River nearby, and eventually used it to provide energy to his own residence, it is possible that the brick house also was electrified long before its other neighbors.

Olmsted County records indicate that the Biemann house was rehabilitated in the 1930s, when exterior walls were anchored to address structural shifting and some interior walls and ceilings were re-plastered.³⁸ Whether this work was done during the period of Dr. Charlie's ownership, or if it was part of the ambitious remodeling efforts that took place when Dr. Chuck and Alice Mayo owned the house, is not currently known.



Lillie Plank in the living room of her red brick home on the Mayowood estate, 1963. History Center of Olmsted County.

1939–1968: Dr. Charles W. (Chuck) Mayo

There is no doubt that the house underwent changes before becoming the residence of Mrs. Mayo's parents, Chester and Lillie Plank. Alice Mayo, who had an avid interest in interior design, reconfigured its interior to meet their needs by closing the steep stairway to the third floor tower room to create a closet in the front entryway, allowing access to that floor only via the present staircase. The tower room became Alice's art studio and was sometimes also used by her mother, an accomplished seamstress, as a sewing room. The two primary rooms of the main floor were employed as a living room, to the left of the entryway, and the master bedroom. At the rear of this floor was a sunroom that is believed to have been added for the Planks. The lower level held the original kitchen, a laundry room, storage, a small sitting room, and a screened porch. Family members also report that the garage, as well as the front terrace above it, was added for the Planks.³⁹ A close inspection of the 1917 photograph of the Lifkos confirms this likelihood.

Following the death of Lillie Plank in 1966, the Mayo son Edward (Ned) moved into the house with his wife Rita and two children. The children and their nanny took over the house's top floor—with the tower room serving as a bedroom for the children, who eventually numbered three, and the bedroom across the hall being used by the nanny. The Mayos closed the door that opened from the

living room to the driveway and concealed this behind an interior bookcase, but otherwise continued to use the rest of the house much as it had been before. The lower level sitting room became a favorite setting for parties and the spring house just outside was often used to chill beverages in the summer.⁴⁰ ■

1969–1979: Mayo Wood Enterprises, Ltd.

Under Mayo Wood Enterprises' ownership, a new underground electrical service was installed at the house and a second kitchen was added to its main floor, so that it could be divided into two rental units. Various parties—many of them medical residents at the Mayo Clinic—occupied the house until Mayo Wood Enterprises sold it to Olmsted County in 1979. ■

1979–Present: Olmsted County

The Historical Society continued to use the house as a rental property until 1994, and as a residence for its director until August of 1999. The Historical Society did not remodel the house during this period; however, probably in the winter of 1999, freezing temperatures inside the house caused a plumbing failure that damaged its heating and plumbing systems, as well as much of its interior. The house is currently not in fit condition for habitation. ■



Figure 2. Front view of the Biermann house, 2010. Although the house is believed to have been built by John FitzJermole Harmon in the 1860s, Adolph Biermann likely added the Romanesque entry tower in the 1880s. The front terrace and garage were constructed in the 1930s, during a renovation of the house that prepared it to become the home of Alice Mayo's parents (see lower level floor plan for photo vantage point).

C. Physical Description

The pages to follow will describe the house's site, structural features and materials, beginning with its exterior and progressing from room to room within the house. Much of this story will be told through photographs documenting the house's current form and features. The drawings included in the final section of this report may also be helpful to understanding the house's design.

Site

The asphalt entry drive to the Mayo wood residence begins at the Biermann house and follows a half mile course along a low limestone wall, built in the early years of the estate's development, that displays English-style craftsmanship through its "dragon tooth" design. At one time, these stone fences lined the roads and various Mayo wood farms, as well as running along Salem road to the home of Dr. Henry Plummer, another founder of the Mayo Clinic, in southwest Rochester.

The spring house located between the house and the lake may be the oldest building in the Mayo wood Historic District. The second residence indicated on the 1868 plat map also would have been close to this structure, which provides access to one of many natural springs in this area.

Though its door is missing, the spring house appears to have been re-pointed at some point in the last 30 years and its dome has been coated with concrete.



Spring House



Figure 3. *View of the house from the Mayowood driveway. Note the “dragon tooth” wall (see lower level floor plan for photo vantage point).*



View of Mayowood Lake from the site.

Building exterior

This is a two-and-a-half story, cross-gabled brick structure, consisting of corner rooms with central circulation halls and stairs. The red brick material is arranged in a variation of the American common bond pattern, with six instead of five stretcher courses alternating with one header course. In areas where repair has occurred, header pieces have been randomly inserted. Thickened corners at the front of the house utilize a running bond pattern and the entire house displays flush mortar joints.

A central entry tower, presumed to have been added in the 1880s, dominates its façade. Other additions, including a single stall garage whose roof is used as the front terrace and a porch addition at the rear of the building, appear to have been added in the 1930s.

The four gables meet at the center of the house's original section, where there is a small skylight. The flat roofs over the sunroom addition and the cellar are covered with rolled asphalt. The cellar roof has failed completely, exposing the interior to rain and snow. The tower roof has not been examined and is assumed to be covered with rolled roofing material, as well.



North side of house. The lower level exterior wall is lime stone, as is the rest of the house foundation. This stone is very similar to the stone used to construct the spring house and foundation of the cellar.



Figure 4. View from near the spring house (see lower level floorplan for photo vantage point). The sunroom was part of a 1930s remodeling and the cellar was built at an unknown date.



North side of house, including the garage.



Southwest view. Note the house's cross gabled roof and the central tower, which has a skylight.



Southeast view of corner detail.

Lower level

The lower/ground level holds a single stall garage with access to the house, whose poured concrete roof serves as the front street level terrace. Adjacent to the garage is a covered entry into a large rectangular parlor or family room.

This room is in good condition, with flaking paint having been removed. The fireplace sits symmetrically between two windows with flanking bookshelves. Besides the exterior entry into this room, there are two interior doors leading to the centralized hallway. Also on this floor is a full bath and kitchen.

A two-story sunroom, reportedly added in the late 1930s or early 1940s, is accessed from the central back hall. This portion of the house is wood framed and clad with cedar shakes. Despite being newer than the original house, it is arguably in worse condition.



Figure 5. *Lower level family room. The far wall originally was an exterior one (see lower level floor plan for photo vantage point).*



Figure 6. *Lower level bathroom (see lower level floor plan for photo vantage point).*



Figure 7. *Lower level kitchen. This is believed to be the original kitchen location (see lower level floor plan for photo vantage point).*



Figure 8. Lower level sunroom addition. The entrance to the cellar is located in the closet on the far wall (see lower level floor plan for photo vantage point).



Lower level utility room



Lower level entrance from garage



Lower level family room. Note the concealment of pipes and radiator within cabinetry.

Main Level

Up the stairs is the main level of the home, accessible nearly at grade from two points, the front veranda and the rear sunroom porch. This level hosts an entry vestibule, which is part of the tower addition. Inside, there is a large parlor with a fireplace. To the right of the fireplace, an exterior doorway has been converted to a bookshelf.

This room connects through French doors to a dining or sleeping room, which at one time led to a pantry or closet. This doorway has been filled in. Through the central hallway there is a room fit out currently as a bathroom and access to the upper story of the sunroom, which has a kitchen partially intact.



Figure 9. *Main floor living room. During the 1930s remodeling, the doorway to the right of the fireplace was removed and replaced with a window. It is possible that the original windows may also have been replaced at this time (see lower level floor plan for photo vantage point).*



Figure 10. *Main floor living room, looking into the master bedroom (see main level floor plan for photo vantage point).*



Figure 11. *Main floor living room, looking into the front vestibule. The door to the right of the room's entrance leads to a closet (see main level floor plan for photo vantage point).*



Main floor living room door detail.



Master bedroom/dining room wall, showing the closed doorway.



Figure 12. *Kitchen in the main floorsunroom addition (see main level floorplan for photo vantage point).*



Kitchen in the main floorsunroom addition (alternate vantage point).

Upper Level

Up the stairs from the main level of the home, and accessible from a single point of entry, is a staircase from the living room hallway. Another staircase within the entry tower was enclosed or removed during the 1930s renovation. It is believed that Adolph Biermann built this as a means to access his living quarters without disturbing the house's other occupants or involving his visitors with household activities.

This level hosts four closets, each in a corner of the house. There are also two bedrooms, one bathroom and a central hallway. The larger bedroom was used as a children's bedroom by Ned and Rita Mayo, a painting studio by Alice Mayo, a sewing room by Mrs. Plank, and, presumably, a bedroom and sitting room by Adolph Biermann. This is a spectacular room—the largest in house—and has a central skylight where the fourables meet.



Skylight in the tower addition's upper level bedroom



Stairway from the main floor to the upper level



Upper level hallway, looking from the largest bedroom to the stairwell. The right side wall was added at a later point, and is the probable cause of structural stress in the main floor living room ceiling.



Figure 13. *Upper level bathroom (see upper level floor plan for photo vantage point).*



Figure 14. *Upper level bedroom (see upper level floor plan for photo vantage point).*



Upper level small bedroom with corner closet



Upper level closet corner detail from stairs hallway

D. EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE

Historic resources give a community a sense of its individual character and values, and help to distinguish it from other places. Awareness of a specific site or structure's historic context gives insight into the reasons for preserving it, often suggests appropriate ways for it to be re-used, and can provide guidelines for restoration, conservation, and interpretation of sites. Generally, historic structures like the Biemann house are significant if they typify particular architectural styles or construction methods, if they have been used by people who are associated with important events, or if they represent or have been part of important historic trends. Through its owners, the Biemann farmstead can be associated with several important historic contexts that give it value and meaning.

1. The Evolution of Minnesota Agriculture

Inasmuch as this site was developed as a farmstead during the earliest days of Minnesota history and its structures were used successively by the Harmon family and their mortgage holders, Adolph Biemann and his tenant farmers, and the staff and management of the complex agricultural enterprise that was Mayo wood, this farmstead represents the evolution of southern Minnesota agriculture. As farms and the markets they served expanded during Minnesota's first century, this industry was transformed from the subsistence farming of early settlers like the Williams family, and the wheat monoculture that took hold in the 1860s, to the diversified crop and dairy production common during the era of Adolph Biemann's ownership. This led to the predominance of dairy production in the region, the widespread use of scientific farming methods and the growth of large-scale farming operations, as exemplified in Dr. Charlie Mayo's Mayo wood farms. Further research may help to strengthen this context of significance if more is learned about the Harmons' ownership era, especially if the stone barn on the Ivy Lodge property and the spring house on the Biemann property can be linked to owners predating the Mayos.

The story of this farmstead is a valuable counterpoint to the one represented by the neighboring George Stoppel farm, owned by the History Center of Olmsted County and also listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The Stoppel and the Williams families would have homesteaded their land at about the same time, were both recent American immigrants, and would have raised similar crops under similar conditions. But, over the long term, the farms took divergent paths. While the Stoppels remained for generations on their land, and continued to work the farm for their livelihood, the Williams family saw financial opportunity in selling their newly-established farm to a land broker and moving on to start anew. Subsequent owners continued to trade and manage the property as an investment until the Mayo era, when, like the Stoppel farm before it, it acquired a more lingering status as a family seat.

2. The Mayo wood Estate

The Biemann farmstead also has significance as a contributing part of the nationally-significant Mayo wood estate, home to three generations of Dr. Charlie Mayo's family. Specifically, its significance within this context derives from its use to house staff and several generations of family members—especially Chester Plank, who managed the farms for more than twenty years, and his wife Lillie, who lived in the house for a longer term than any of its other occupants.

Essential to an understanding of Dr. Charlie's life style and values, Mayo wood provides much insight into the character of a man who is widely recognized as one of the founders of the integrated medical practice that is now a recognized standard. In this sense, it is nationally—if not internationally—significant. Mayo wood's significance in this context was the basis for the main residence's listing in the National Register of Historic Places in 1970 and for the listing of the Mayo wood Historic District, which includes the Biemann house, in 1982.

Since that time, other contexts for Mayo wood's significance have been proposed. One further context of national significance is the American Country Life movement of the early twentieth century, which promoted the development of rural estates according to scientific farming principles and aesthetic criteria. The farming, horticultural and landscape design practices at Mayo wood during Dr. Charlie's life time reflect the highest standard of scientific research of his era, as well as a sensitivity to the aesthetics of landscape design that is consistent with the Country Life movement and incorporates elements of English, Italian and Japanese garden design.⁴¹

Inasmuch as the Mayo family was responsible for the establishment of innumerable public programs, institutions and facilities locally, Mayo wood also has regional significance. Initiatives that are most closely associated with Mayo wood include the agricultural experiments and demonstration projects mentioned earlier, which led directly to advances in public health. During the early decades of the twentieth century, standards of sanitation that are now taken for granted were still viewed with a certain amount of skepticism. Mayo wood Farms' model dairy operation and Dr. Charlie's project to recycle food waste as hog feed demonstrated their achievability and value, helping to educate the public at a time when Dr. Charlie also was using his influence to improve local sanitation regulations.

As part of a statewide survey of historic resources, the Mayo wood Historic District was created in 1982 and listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The District consists of a section of the Mayo wood estate that amounts to about 120 acres, along with various structures on it. These include the Mayo family's principal residence, the Ivy Lodge complex, the Farm Number One complex, the greenhouse complex, the Mayo wood bridge and dam, and the Biemann house. All of these structures played distinct roles in the evolution of Mayo wood

and are important to the understanding of its operations and the Mayo wood residents who were engaged in them.

3. Patterns of Development in Early Southeast Minnesota

The Biemann property also is significant for its association to the early history and growth of southeast Minnesota. It relates to the initial settlement of the region and the development of Rochester Township through its owners: the Williams family, hardscrabble Welsh immigrants who homesteaded the site and exploited its appreciated value; John Harmon, a New England farmer and businessman responding to aggressive marketing by purchasing investment property and raising a cash crop before moving on; and Adolph Biemann, a Norwegian immigrant who sub-contracted farm labor so he could pursue his political ambitions.

As well, the political careers of both Harmon, an elected official of Rochester Township official in the first years of its history, and Biemann, active in the early Minnesota Democratic party (a precursor of the modern Democratic Farmer Labor party), associate the property with the development of government in both Olmsted County and the state of Minnesota. This association is continued, although more indirectly, through Dr. Charlie Mayo's ownership of the property and his role in local public health and other forms of civic engagement. ■

E. Condition Assessment

This structure is in fair to good condition overall, with an understood need for some reinforcement and attention to overdue maintenance. The following are general areas of concern:

Site. The portions of the “dragon tooth” wall adjacent to the Biemann House are in poor, but salvageable, condition. The landscape and grounds are, for the most part, untended and overgrown with weeds and scrub brush. As well, existing trees and bushes are too close to the house. The driveway is in fair condition.

Exterior Masonry. The exterior limestone foundation and brickwork is in rough condition. There are many cracks believed to have been caused by the settling of the house over the years. There is evidence of efflorescence due to water infiltration, perhaps from leaks in the roof, cracks in the brick and/or missing and cracked mortar joints.

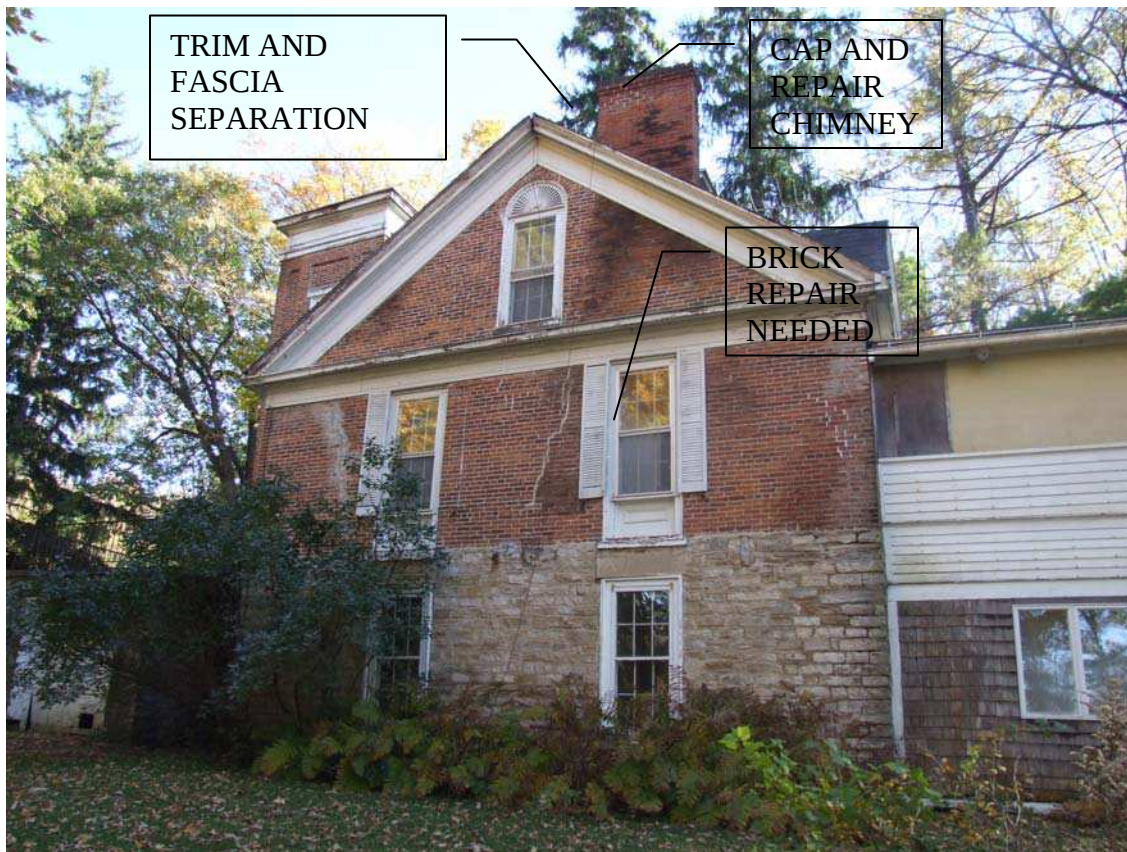


Figure 15: North wall showing exterior (see lower level floor plan for photo vantage point).

Structure. Several problem areas particularly need further study: a large crack in the living room ceiling and the northeast corner of the main level bedroom, which seems to be moving. The poured concrete terrace, which is also the roof of the garage, is showing signs of distress and wear. There is active spalling of the concrete, with exposed rebar in many areas.

The stone foundation under the south end of the steps and terrace is crumbling and may also require observation. Two stabilizing anchors in the entrance tower addition are believed to have been installed during the 1930s remodeling may need to be looked at, as well, to consider the theory that removal of the tower stairway may have created the need for the anchors.



Main floor living room showing cracked plaster and sag in ceiling. The wall above, probably added during remodeling, unduly transfers the roof load to joists in the floor/ceiling assembly.



Northeast corner of main floor bedroom. This corner appears to have moved, or is moving.



Crumbling front steps and foundation



Crumbling limestone foundation under concrete terrace



Stabilizing anchors in the entrance tower addition

Roofing. The roof over the main section of the house, the entrance tower roof and two flat roofs over the cellar and sunroom are in poor condition. There are active leaks and evidence of water damage in the upstairs bedroom and a small tree growing out of the south end gable. The cellar roof has a gaping hole, approximately two feet square. The roof trim and fascia are in poor condition, with gaps that allow for water infiltration.



Water damage in upstairs bedroom ceiling



Exterior gable detail, showing trim separation. Some of the cracking and shifting appears to have been caused by settling. Crack monitors need to be installed and monitored to understand whether the cracks are active.



Figure 16. *Collapsed roof on cellar (see lower level floor plan for photo vantage point).*



Small tree growing out of gable roof

Systems. Plumbing has been disabled since a pipe burst in the main floor bathroom. Mechanical and electrical systems are no longer operational and the electric power and gas have been turned off. There is no longer any running water in the house, which is currently not conditioned and has not been used for over a decade.



Water service to the house was disconnected when pipes froze and burst in 1999.



Disconnect electrical service



Mechanical room

Interior. Deferred maintenance, lack of climate control, water infiltration, abuse by renters, and the current lack of funds for any maintenance have all had a very negative effect on the interior of the house. Contributing factors, like the lack of electricity, running water and climate control, have limited the History Center of Olmsted County's ability to maintain the house.

Currently, every system in the house needs attention. There are specific problems caused by the lack of climate control that have damaged painted walls, wall papers, wood trim, doors and cabinets throughout the house. The kitchen appliances remaining in the house no longer work. ■



Figure 17. *Moisture intrusion and its effects on paint and plaster in the lower level kitchen (see lower level floor plan for photo vantage point).*



Main floor kitchen



Upper level hallway ceiling



Lower level kitchen ceiling

PART2: TREATMENT AND WORK RECOMMENDATIONS

There are many considerations involved in preservation planning for the Biemann House. Outlined below are some of these.

Benefits:

- The Biemann house, as well as the original buildings and structures of Mayo wood farms numbers 1 and 2, the greenhouse complex, the “dragon tooth” walls, Mayo wood’s principal residence and its historic gardens, and Mayo wood Lake with its WPA bridge and dam, offer significant educational and cultural tourism opportunities. If a comprehensive preservation, restoration and re-use plan were implemented, the Mayo wood Historic District could become one of the most important destination attractions in Minnesota.
- Associated with working farms from the early 1850s to the 1960s, the site derives significance from its connection to some of Rochester’s earliest pioneer families. The Biemann house and its site embody the evolution of Minnesota farming from the subsistence era of 1853, through the wheat farming monoculture of the 1870s and later crop diversification, to the scientific agricultural techniques and industrial scale of Mayo wood Farms.
- The architectural style of the Biemann house dates back to the 1860s and is distinctive, especially in contrast to the style of Ivy Lodge and the Mayo wood residence. It thus provides its own unique flavor to the district.
- The Biemann house was an integral part of the Mayo wood estate’s development and the birth of the Mayo family’s country lifestyle. As a functional component of the estate’s operation, the house contributes to an understanding of Dr. Charles Mayo’s lifestyle and values, and presents an opportunity to learn about his family’s way of life.

Challenges:

- The current ownership/ lease agreement has hindered any rehabilitation or use of the structure.
- There is no interpretation of the house at its prominent position in the Mayo wood Historic District.
- Deferred maintenance has led to serious building issues.
- Site access is confusing and vague, both to Mayo wood as well as to the Biemann House. ADA access is non-existent and will need be incorporated if the site is to function as a tour destination. This is true throughout the grounds.

Historic Preservation objectives

This report has uncovered sufficient evidence to support restoring the home to its condition in the late 1930s, after the Mayo family undertook a significant remodel of the house to accommodate Alice Mayo's parents moving to the estate. This might entail removal of fixtures and finishes added after that date, and the repair and reconditioning of original materials and finishes.

Requirements for Work

Code compliance: This structure would be considered a B(Business) Occupancy for some proposed re-uses. The construction is primarily masonry with wood interior partition walls, which classifies it as a type V-N. The base allowable area for construction of a B Occupancy is 8,000 square feet, and the Biemann house is well under that limit. In addition, the house does not exceed the maximum two stories above grade.

Accessibility: Accessibility is an issue for this property and, using the *Guide lines for the Rehabilitation for Existing Buildings* published by the International Code Council in 2004 and adopted as Code by the Minnesota State Legislature in Minnesota Rules 1311, an accessibility plan should be developed to provide access to most of the interior.⁴² With any addition of public restrooms, toilet room accessibility would need to be addressed.

As a rental home, the ADA requirements are less stringent. However, forethought regarding the future of the home, as well as making it accessible to all users, should be considered.

The following floorplans have been developed with an understanding of the potential uses being proposed for the property.

Work Recommendations and Alternatives

The following spreadsheet further explains the work referenced in the architectural drawing notes, as well as in the condition assessment. In all, preservation, restoration, or repair of existing materials should be attempted before replacement is considered.

The highest priority for this restoration project is to prevent the building from further damage. To achieve this, the building envelope needs to be sealed through the replacement of the cedar shake and flat roofs and the restoration and repair of all windows and doors. In addition, the roof structure of the cellar needs reconstruction.

Structural repair and masonry re-pointing is needed throughout the exterior, including repairing gaps in the fascia and complete trim restoration. Issues with the structure are mainly in the deteriorated brick, which forms the structure as well as the cladding. Some of the cracking and shifting appears to have been caused by settling. The remaining question is when settlement occurred, or if the

house is still shifting. The use of crack monitors to monitor current activity would be useful.

Achieving and maintaining a consistent year-round temperature would benefit structure components and finishes. Since the home is not secure, reliable locks and a security system should be installed for vandalism prevention, in addition to air-tight windows and door seals for climate and pest control. Fire protection should also be considered.

In the longer term, when preservation objectives are better defined, the issues of code compliance and accessibility discussed earlier should be considered. At a minimum, the stairs at the terrace will need reconstruction. If the building is to be rehabilitated as a public facility, with the attendant requirement for accessibility, there is grade access at the lower level walkout and the now-closed main level entrance. Also, reconstruction of the sunroom addition in the back of the house may be an opportunity to incorporate accessibility. Its rehabilitation should be considered with regard to the proposed use of the house.

Projects worthy of future consideration at the site include the restoration of the stone “dragon tooth” walls, additional historical work to put the house into the context of American architectural history, and architectural and archaeological study of the spring house, as well as the stone barn in the Ivy Lodge complex, to learn more about their construction history. Since there are no records of soil or hydrogeological studies, such work could be undertaken to identify issues with the home’s hillside setting, roadside proximity, and the presence of various streams and cisterns nearby.

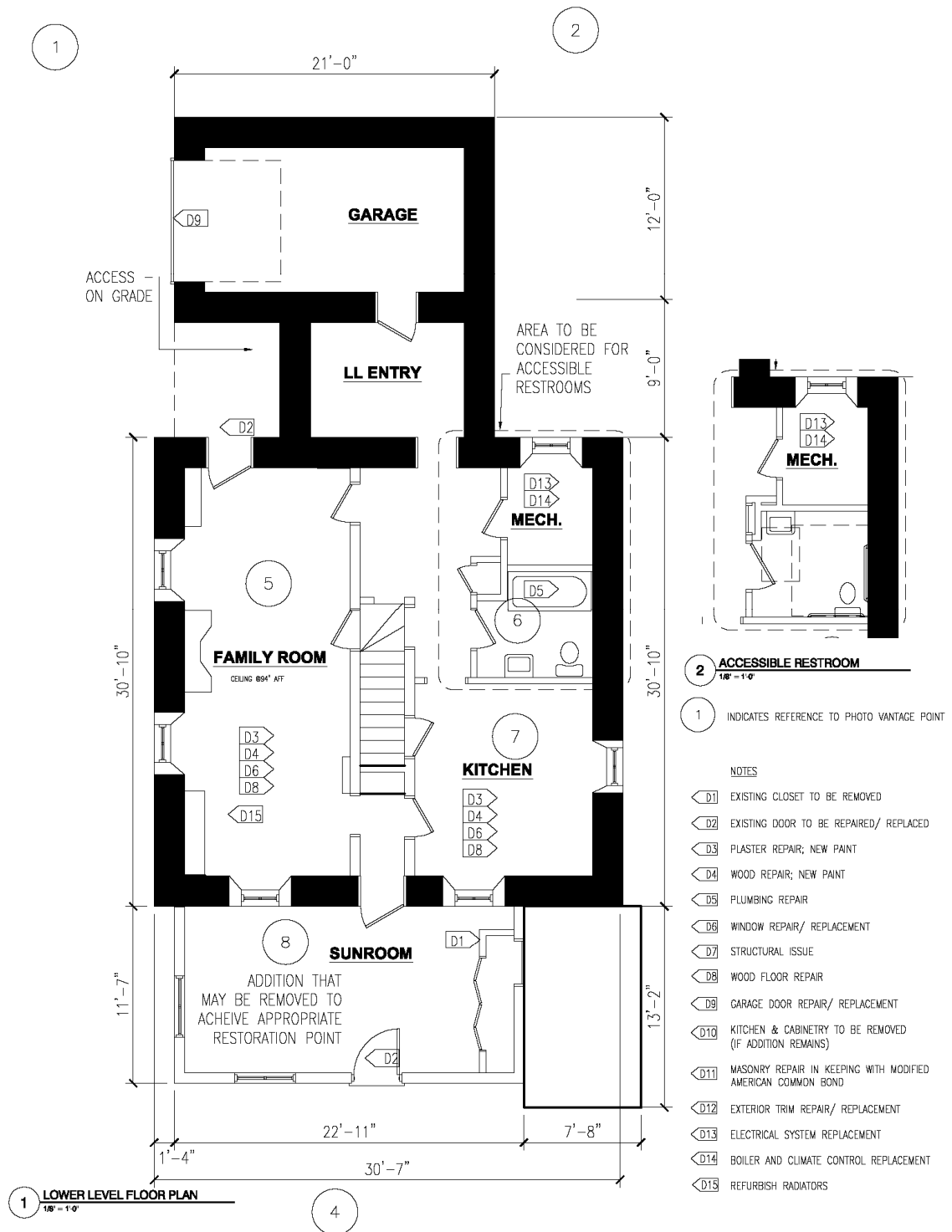
Site. The “dragon tooth” stone walls on the property should be cleaned and re-pointed, and any missing elements should be replaced. The landscape and grounds need to be tended to, and undesirable weeds, scrub brush and trees should be removed. The trees and bushes that are too close to the house need to be removed or trimmed back. The driveway needs to be cleaned, repaired as needed, and a new seal coating applied. A cultural landscape report should be considered, as should an archaeological survey to locate the original site of the Williams log cabin and other outbuildings.

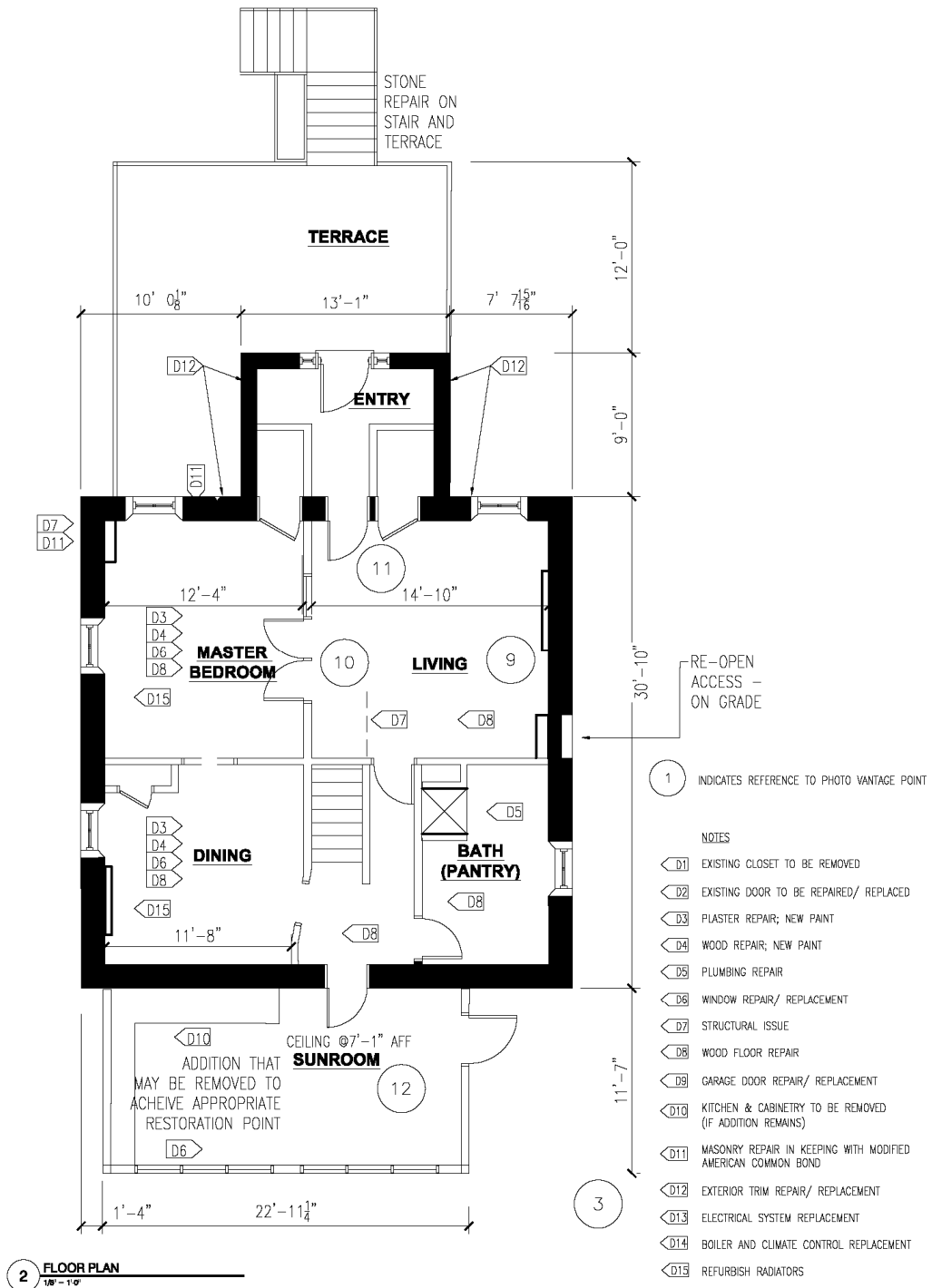
Exterior Masonry. The limestone and brick need to be cleaned, using the least aggressive method possible. Sources of water infiltration and consequent efflorescence need to be addressed. Damaged bricks need to be replaced, and cracks repaired. The brick exterior walls and limestone foundations should be repaired and re-pointed. The roof leaks need to be stopped by repair or roof replacement, and the fascia separation on the north gable needs to be repaired. The installation of eaves and downspouts would help move water away from the sides of the house and foundations and, therefore, is recommended.

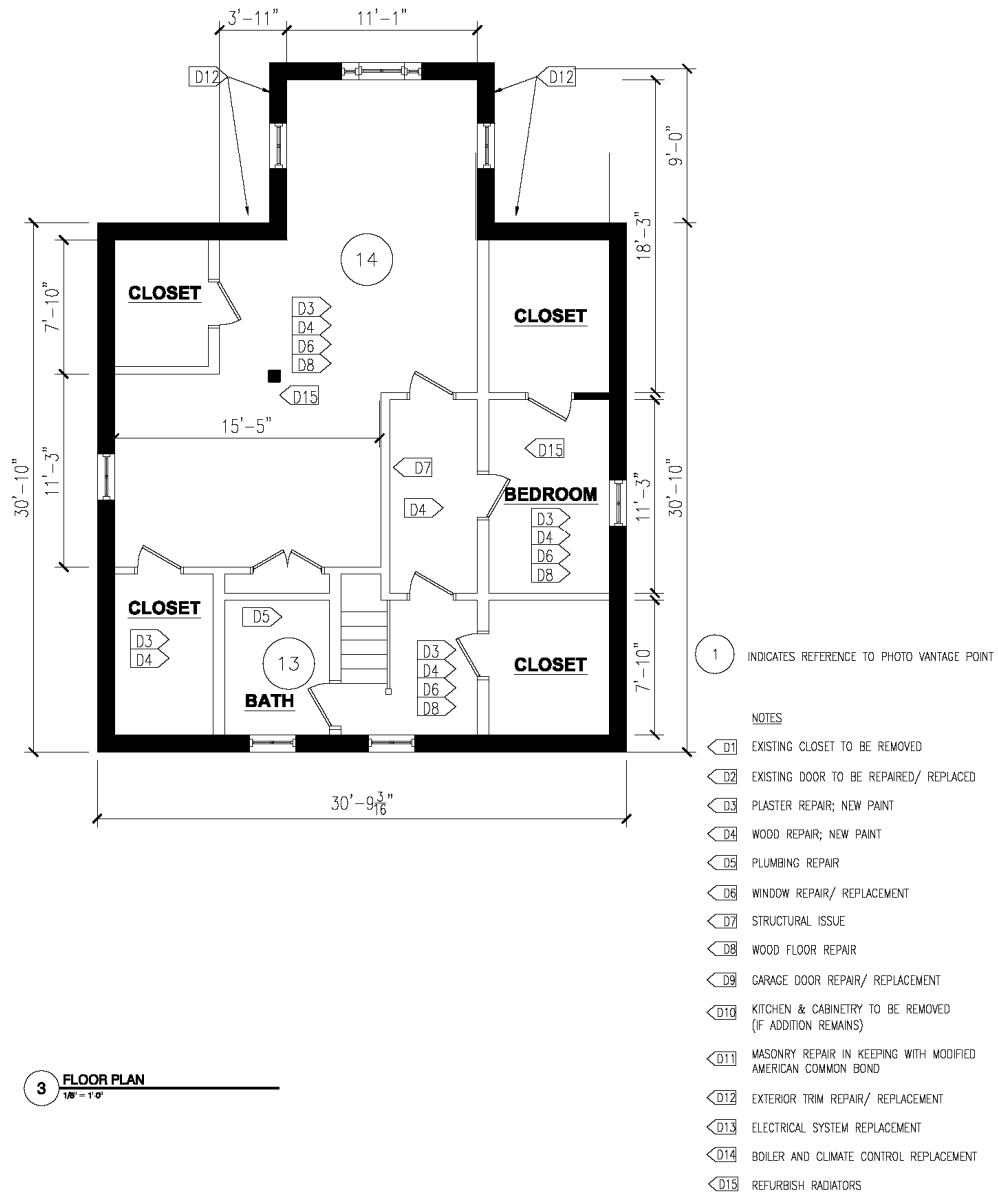
Structure. The large crack in the living room ceiling should be examined further and repaired. As well, it would be beneficial to explore opening the third floor framing to investigate the sag in the living room ceiling, which may have been caused by settling of the foundation, the removal of a load bearing wall during the 1930s remodel, or the addition of a wall or structure directly above the ceiling. The sag in the northeast corner of the first floor bedroom may also have been caused by a settling or shifting problem and should be monitored to see if there is ongoing movement. The two stabilizing anchors in the entrance tower addition need to be examined to make sure there are still in good condition and functioning as expected. The front terrace's stone foundation also needs repair, and the front steps need replacing.

Roofing. The main roof, currently covered with asphalt shingles, needs to be replaced and may need new decking. Heavy cedar shakes should be specified as replacement shingles. In addition, the entrance tower roof and the two flat roofs need to be replaced. The fascia and trim concerns, as well as the sag in the ceiling in the living room, should also be addressed as part of roof replacement.

Systems. A new electrical service should be installed, and all electric wiring repaired or replaced. The water pipes from the shared well, as well as the indoor plumbing, should be inspected and repaired or replaced, as needed, before being put back into service. A new HVAC system also should be installed, with the type of system installed being informed by the planned re-use of the building. The possibility of installing a fire suppression system should be explored as an additional means of protection. ■







BIERMANN HOUSE HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT
OPINION OF COST FOR RESTORATION

ROOM	BASIC WORK NEEDED	Area	Quantity	Units
GARAGE	DOOR REPAIR (traditional door to be implemented)		1	sf
ENTRY-LOWER LEVEL	DOOR REPAIR/ PRESERVE	74	1	door sf
FAMILY ROOM	WOOD FLOOR REPAIR	315		sf
	MECHANICAL	315		sf
	ELECTRICAL		4	recpt.
	TRIM PAINT/ REPAIR	315		sf
	WINDOW PAINT/ REPAIR		2	openings
SUNROOM-LOWER LEVEL	FLOORING REPAIR	218		sf
	WINDOW PAINT/ REPAIR		2	openings
	CLOSET DEMO	14		sf
KITCHEN	CABINET REPAIR		1	bank
	TRIM PAINT/ REPAIR	142		sf
	WINDOW PAINT/ REPAIR		2	openings
	MECHANICAL	142		sf
	PLUMBING (fixtures and fittings)		2	fixtures
	ELECTRICAL		4	recpt.
BATHROOM-LOWER LEVEL	FLOORING REPAIR	58		sf
	TRIM PAINT/ REPAIR	58		sf
	MECHANICAL	58		sf
	ELECTRICAL		4	recpt.
	PLUMBING(fixtures and fittings)		2	fixture
MECHANICAL	NEW SYSTEM			
	WINDOW PAINT/ REPAIR		1	window
ENTRY-MAIN	WOOD FLOOR REPAIR	100		sf
	TRIM PAINT/ REPAIR	100		sf
	MECHANICAL			sf
	DOOR REPAIR		1	door
	ELECTRICAL		3	recpt.
LIVING ROOM	FLOORING REPAIR	225		sf
	TRIM PAINT/ REPAIR	225		sf
	WINDOW PAINT/ REPAIR	1		sf
	MECHANICAL	225		sf
	NEW DOOR(traditional door to be implemented)		1	doors
	ELECTRICAL		4	recpt.
MASTER BEDROOM	FLOORING REPAIR	187		sf
	TRIM PAINT/ REPAIR	187		sf
	WINDOW PAINT/ REPAIR		3	opening
	MECHANICAL	187		sf
	ELECTRICAL		4	recpt.
KITCHEN	FLOORING REPAIR	155		sf
	TRIM PAINT/ REPAIR	155		sf
	WINDOW PAINT/ REPAIR	1		opening
	MECHANICAL	155		sf
	ELECTRICAL	155	4	recpt.

BIERMANN HOUSE HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT
OPINION OF COST FOR RESTORATION

SUNROOM-MAIN	FLOORING REPAIR	218		sf
	DEMO OF KITCHENETTE		1	fixtures
	TRIM PAINT/ REPAIR	218		sf
	WINDOW PAINT/ REPAIR		6	lf
	MECHANICAL			
BATHROOM-MAIN	ELECTRICAL		4	recpt.
	FLOORING REPAIR	95		sf
	TRIM PAINT/ REPAIR	95		sf
	WINDOW PAINT/ REPAIR		1	opening
	MECHANICAL			
BATHROOM-UPPER FLOOR	ELECTRICAL		3	recpt.
	PLUMBING(removal)		2	fixtures
	FLOORING REPAIR	95		sf
	TRIM PAINT/ REPAIR	95		sf
	WINDOW PAINT/ REPAIR		1	opening
BEDROOM-SMALL	MECHANICAL			
	ELECTRICAL		4	recpt.
	PLUMBING(removal)		2	fixtures
	FLOORING REPAIR	80		sf
	TRIM PAINT/ REPAIR	80		sf
BEDROOM-LARGE	WINDOW PAINT/ REPAIR		1	
	MECHANICAL			
	ELECTRICAL		2	recpt.
	FLOORING REPAIR	480		sf
	TRIM PAINT/ REPAIR	480		sf
EXTERIOR	WINDOW PAINT/ REPAIR	4		
	MECHANICAL			
	ELECTRICAL		5	recpt.
	FRAMING REPAIR		1	area
EXTERIOR	STONE REPAIR			
	BRICK REPAIR			
	INCLUDE RESTORATION OF CAPS AND CHIMNEY			
	CEDAR SHAKE ROOF	2060		sf
	ADDITIONAL TRIM RESTORATION	260		lf

<u>COST OPINION</u>	<u>OVERALL WORK</u>	<u>LOW</u>	<u>HIGH</u>
	PLUMBING	20,000	40,000
	PROFESSIONAL FEES	18,000	25,000
	NEW ELECTRICAL	11,500	18,000
	Allowance for rebuilt historic fixtures	8,000	13,000
	NEW MECHANICAL	25,000	33,000
	WINDOW/ DOOR REPAIR	26,000	32,000
	STRUCTURAL REPAIR	4,000	8,000
	MASONRY REPAIR	8,000	12,000
	PAINTING & SURFACE RESTORATION	18,000	22,000
	PLASTER	10,000	15,000
	EXTERIOR SITE CLEAN-UP-NO PAVING	4,800	9,500
	STONE WALL WORK	10,000	15,000
	CEDAR SHAKE ROOF RESTORATION	12,000	18,000
		175,300	260,500

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- ² W. H. Hill, ed., *History of Olmsted County, Minnesota* (Chicago: H. H. Hill & Co., 1883), pp. 646-647; William Williams obituary, *Olmsted County Democrat*, February 25, 1910. Some accounts offer 1854 as the year William Williams and George Head first settled; likewise, reports of the family's arrival in Olmsted County differ slightly, with some sources offering dates in early 1856.
- ³ "Old Rural Mail Carrier," *Rochester Post and Record*, July 7, 1920.
- ⁴ Tal Williams obituary, *Rochester Post and Record*, July 7, 1920; Olmsted County deed registry, book E, p. 567.
- ⁵ Olmsted County deed registry, Book I, pp. 125 and 135.
- ⁶ *The History of Winona and Olmsted Counties* (Chicago: H. H. Hill, 1883), p. 1128; Rochester Township Record Book, 1858-1908, pp. 69, 91.
- ⁷ Olmsted County Plat Map, Rochester Township (Bennett and Smith, 1868).
- ⁸ Harriet W. Hodgson, *Rochester: City of the Prairie* (Northridge, CA: Windsor Publications, 1989), p. 13.
- ⁹ 1860 U.S. Federal census, Camillus, Onondaga County, New York.
- ¹⁰ 1870 U.S. Federal census, Rochester, Olmsted County, Minnesota; 1875 Minnesota census, Rochester Township, Olmsted County. The 1875 census also lists a 26-year-old son named Laurence.
- ¹¹ Olmsted County deed registry, Book 31, p. 28; Olmsted County mortgage registry, Book V, p. 608.
- ¹² S. B. Andrus, J. F. J. Harmon, Eunice Harmon and Helen Harmon, bond for deed, September 15, 1877, History Center of Olmsted County archives, box R-6.
- ¹³ "Western Farms and Homes," Boston, MA: Harris, Cowles & Co., ca. 1856.
- ¹⁴ Sylvester B. Andrus obituary, *Rochester Post*, Feb. 15, 1895; "Old Pioneers," *Rochester Post*, March 10, 1882.
- ¹⁵ Sylvester B. Andrus obituaries: *Rochester Post*, Feb. 15, 1895; *Rochester Record & Union*, Feb. 15, 1895; and "A Pioneer Gone," *Oakes [North Dakota] Weekly Republican*, Jan. 25, 1885; "A Pioneer at Rest" (Harriet Andrus obituary), *Oakes [North Dakota] Times*, January 12, 1923; *Plat Book of Olmsted County, Minnesota*,

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¹⁶ Olmsted County deed register, Book 52, p. 505; Olmsted County mortgage register, Book 39, p. 503.

¹⁷ Olson genealogy file, History Center of Olmsted County archives, Biermann family collection, Box R-6.

¹⁸ 1885 U.S. Census, Rochester Township, Olmsted County.

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²⁰ "The Local News," *Rochester Daily Bulletin*, September 5, 1905.

²¹ *Olmsted County Democrat*, April 26, 1907.

²² Judith Hartzell, *Mrs. Charlie: The Other Mayo* (Gables, ME: Arvi Books, 2000), 42; Helen Clapesattle, *The Doctors Mayo* (Rochester, MN: Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research, 1990), p. 283.

²³ U. S. Federal census, Rochester, Olmsted County, 1920; U. S. Federal census, Rochester Township, Olmsted County, 1930.

²⁴ Hartzell, *Mrs. Charlie*, p. 47.

²⁵ Lance Neckar and Carole Zellie, *Mayowood: A History and Plan for Conservation and Reconstruction* (St. Paul, MN: Landscape Research, 2002), p. 12.

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²⁷ U.S. Federal census, Rochester Township, Olmsted County, 1930.

²⁸ Maria Mayo Donovan, conversation with Jane Bise, February 22, 2011.

²⁹ *Ibid.*,

³⁰ *Mayowood Business Plan* (Rochester, MN: Olmsted County Historical Society, 2002), p. 6.

³¹ Jack Dolan, "Mayowood Corridor and the 'Brick House,'" memorandum to Olmsted County Park and Recreation Commission, March 21, 1979; "Purchase of Brick House Near Mayowood Urged," *Rochester Post-Bulletin*, April 25, 1979.

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³³ David F. Dunn, “Mayo wood Brick House Inspection,” memorandum to Olmsted County Park and Recreation Commission, April 6, 1979.

³⁴ “Red Brick House,” Olmsted County Public Works internal memorandum, n.d.

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³⁶ Adolph Biemann, letter to Hon. C. F. Buck, n.d., History Center of Olmsted County archives, Biemann family collection, Box R-6.

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³⁸ Jack Dolan, Olmsted County Public Works director, “Mayo wood Brick House Inspection,” memorandum to Olmsted County Park and Recreation Commission, April 6, 1979.

³⁹ Maria Mayo Donovan, conversation with Jane Bisel, February 22, 2011.

⁴⁰ Rita Mayo, conversation with Jane Bisel, February 18, 2011.

⁴¹ Neckar and Zellie, *Mayo wood: A History and Plan*, pp. 14-16.

⁴² *Guidelines for the Rehabilitation for Existing Buildings* (Washington, D. C.: International Code Council, 2004), adopted as Code by the Minnesota State Legislature, in Minnesota Rules 1311.