Survey Purpose

The City of Eau Claire’s comprehensive planning documents show that their goal for historic preservation is to “identify, protect, and preserve Eau Claire’s resources, which reflect distinctive elements of the City’s cultural, social, economic, political, historical, and architectural heritage in order to enhance the quality of life and foster pride and knowledge about Eau Claire’s past.” Also in the comprehensive plan is Objective 1 of that goal, “Evaluation and Designation: Continue to Survey and evaluate historic and potentially historic resources for designation, recognition, and protection.”

The project provides an opportunity for students to learn research methods while providing a public service to the City of Eau Claire as well as the Wisconsin State Historic Preservation Office. The records obtained also help reduce the time needed to research properties for Section 106 compliance in the Randall Park neighborhood.

Survey Methodology

Students select one residential property from the Randall Park Neighborhood at the beginning of the semester. Dr. Mann, in conjunction with the University Archivist, Greg Kocken, provide instruction on the completion of the survey form, methods of research and the sources that are available for completing this project. Students familiarize themselves with the guidelines found in National Register Bulletin 15, “How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation,” before they begin researching their property.

Students become familiar with a variety of sources needed to complete the project. These include Sanborn maps, property tax records, city directories, census records, local business records as well as other records found in the Area Research Center and L.E. Phillips Public Library. Sources are available at several local repositories, including the Eau Claire County Assessor, Eau Claire County Register of Deeds, UW-Eau Claire Archives and Area Research Center, Eau Claire’s L. E. Phillips Public Library and Ancestry.com.

The information collected by students is compiled into an ongoing survey report made available to various stakeholders. The survey form itself consists of four sections: identification information, location information, description information and narratives which justify the determination of eligibility.

Students evaluate National Register eligibility for their property based on the criteria set forth by the National Park Service in National Register Bulletin 15. As part of this process, they evaluate the architectural integrity of the home as well as its potential historic or architectural significance.

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