

Hotel Wausaukee Restoration

Ann Christofferson, a nurse originally from Dubuque Iowa, worked at the Marinette Hospital and purchased the Hotel in 1985. She resided in Menominee Michigan and was on a ski trip to the UP and happened to go thru Wausaukee on the way north and saw that the building was for sale. She arranged multiple trips back, bringing people knowledgeable about structure and commenced to get a more in depth view of what would be needed before she proposed buying it. Once she purchased the building, she immediately took care of some much needed infrastructure improvements to create a space for herself.

The Hotel first went under renovation to carve out a more modern living space on the second floor and seal the building from drafts. Two very small bedrooms with a hallway were removed in 1985 to create a northwest living room on the second floor, a larger bedroom that included a closet was created above the laundry room and a modern full bath for Ann was added. The interior felt cold all year round due to drafts and the infrastructure needed to be upgraded to more modern standards for safety and comfort. Over 100 tubes of caulk were used to seal the 34 custom made aluminum storm/screen combination windows that were added & around doors from drafts. None of the windows in the building were normal sizes. The entire electrical system was rewired to replace knot & tube and upgraded from 40 to 200 amp service, panels are located on the second floor and basement. Much care was taken to add enough electrical sockets in every room in the building to allow for more modern use. Drop ceilings were added to some of the rooms being used to assist with more efficient heating. Blown in insulation was added from the outside by drilling holes into the clapboard, filling the inside walls and then capping the holes. Insulation was also added to the attic to beef up the thermal value. It was a good start to make the place more comfortably livable.

When Ann was at work in Marinette in the late 1980's, the coal hopper auger system supplying stoker coal to the furnace failed to shut off. This caused the inside of the firebox to overheat to a point the outside of the furnace was glowing and the building was overheating. The fire box of the furnace was destroyed in this incident. Luckily Ann arrived after work and checked the system to find the problem and turned off the power to the auger before there was a total meltdown. She had to find a pipe to reach over the top of the furnace to shut off the electric panel that was supplying power to the auger. The fire box was glowing and the heat from it prevented her from getting close to the electric panel. This coal fired plant was sledge hammered into pieces and carted away. A new oil burning furnace replaced it with two 250 gallon oil storage tanks in the adjacent south room. It was unfortunate that we had just had a delivery prior of 6 tons of stoker coal which ended up taking a long time for us to find someone willing to haul it away. There wasn't a huge amount of people burning with coal in our Village in the 80's. Originally we opted for oil because we were told that WPS was not bringing a gas lateral into our building. We opted for an oil burning unit that wasn't equipped to retro fit to gas. Later the furnace was converted to a natural gas supply when a natural gas lateral connection was offered for our building. Converting this unit was very difficult and expensive but we eventually found a kit and installed natural gas when the lateral was brought into the building. The remaining oil and oil tanks were given to a farmer who wished to heat one of his out buildings.

The hotel was completely renovated over the next 30 years using neutral color schemes, antique furniture, wallpaper & paint to maintain the flavor of the past. Being an old hotel, the original wains coated walls, banisters, upper floors, metal ceilings in the Kitchen/Lobby and moldings were all painted from day one. There was no stained hardwood treatments anywhere in the building. This was evidenced by scraping down to bare wood and seeing paint in the pores of the wood surfaces. The clap

board siding was severely weathered over 96 years, the 34 windows had wood removable storm / screens which didn't seal well and the building was in need of many repairs.

The very small room currently used as an inventory room was used for years as our tool storage area. It was centrally located in the building, had access doors to Office 2 and the studio which was convenient to allow us access to all the tools and materials we used during the renovation. After the renovations for the most part were complete, it was painted, wallpapered, cabinets hung and false ceiling put in to offer other uses for the room. It has functioned as an office, tool room and inventory storage over the years.

Brian Hartnell began dating Ann in 1986 and eventually they married in 1990. Ann had compiled a list many pages long on a legal pad that she was systematically checking off as she accomplished projects. Most anyone would find this a daunting task but very doable if you methodically do the work over a long period of time. Weekends, evenings and days off were spent taking on tasks individually or as a couple. Many of the things we needed to do required teamwork to accomplish some of the larger projects. Some of our most memorable fights were over wallpaper hanging.

Ann & Brian Hartnell over the years added more drop ceilings, all rooms were wall papered or painted, the second upper bathroom was re-tiled, wallpapered, new cabinet with sink added, handicap toilet and shower added. The downstairs commercial section consisting of dining hall, hallway, office, lobby, staircase hallway and office 2 floors were hardwood and in need of restoring. All were covered in carpeting or linoleum and this was removed to reveal newspapers that were used as sheeting. Many of the papers were in good legible shape due to being covered with carpet or linoleum and have been preserved. Hundreds of staples were used to hold down loose flooring and all staples were removed prior to sanding down all the floors and refinishing them.

One of the projects was to add storage to the current laundry room. This room has a large cistern located below the floor that in the early years was filled with rain water that was attached to a pump in the kitchen at the sink. Very useful in those days for supplying water for multiple purposes. Unfortunately it also did not contain a lid over the cistern to prevent water damage to beams under the floor during evaporation. That was our first concern and beams were sistered and new subflooring replaced to make the floor solid. Water access had been cut off years earlier so we were fixing the aftermath of years of earlier use and the cistern was now currently bone dry. A deep 6 shelf rack was constructed as you enter and next to that are two hanging bar areas with sliding doors to store tall clothing & cleaning supplies. Above all this we placed a roof for additional large box storage. The adjacent side already had shelving mounted to the walls. Adding washer/dryer hookups, a utility sink and recycling allow a large amount of storage capability and functionality adjacent to the kitchen.

Paint on the original tin panel lobby and kitchen ceilings was blown off with an air compressor to allow removal of the old paint that was cracking & peeling off the tin. New coats of paint were added to seal the tin and add complementary colors to the rooms. We were careful not to add too much and lose the tin panels historical texture and design. Ceiling fans were added to the high kitchen and lobby ceilings for circulation of air.

The exterior of the building was scraped of all loose paint, primed in white once and then repainted with a finished white coat. The building used 55 gallons of paint because of the weathering of the clapboard and soaking up of the paint into the rather deep gashes in the wood. The painting took a full summer of effort. Multiple ladders with ladder jacks and planks stretching between ladders allowed

us to cover large horizontal areas. Due to severe damage to the clapboard over time, the paint only lasted approximately 9 years and the building was eventually vinyl sided for more integrity.

During the course of painting the clapboard & trim above the west front porch, Ann's ladder was set close to the northwest porch roof edge and started to break thru the roof shingles. She held onto the Television antennae pole mounted to the north side of the building she was painting to keep from falling off the ladder. Upon inspection, we found all the rafters and decking for the porch roof had been severely dry rotted. The roof beams, wood decking and shingles were all removed. We took care to preserve the vertical posts and the cross pieces between the posts. New rafters, sheathing & roof were installed. Much later during another restoration the vertical posts were all replaced, new hand railings built, lights added and soffit installed to encase the porch and prevent birds from nesting in the rafters. Electric power was run to a lighted sign that hangs over the sidewalk. The former sign was made of one sheet of metal with the Hotel Wausaukee name painted on both sides and two lights pointed at both sides for illumination. The current sign that replaced the older sign allows a change by replacing the two Plexiglas sheets and uses fluorescent light from the interior.

Brian was employed as the corporate studio photographer at the Ansul Company while they were dating and Ann continued to work at the Marinette Hospital and later nursing homes. Brian owned a home in Marinette and in 1990 the position of photographer was eliminated causing him to do a job search. Nothing developed during the search of over 400 companies and plans were made to sell his home and move to the Hotel Wausaukee. Brian talked Ansul company into paying him to compile a data base of all the valuable photo equipment, fixtures, assign inventory numbers and catalog it with prices to determine current value. He then purchased selected photo equipment to start Graphic Impressions Photography that would support portraiture & photography and computer projects for the Ansul Company and the general public. Ann and Brian both worked on projects thru the studio from the start to his retirement in 2015. The downstairs bath was converted to my darkroom for printing in the 90's & had a 35mm slide/negative processing area to support our international computer image to 35mm slide business which used Commodore Amiga computers. When we closed the slide making business in early 2000, we converted the darkroom to a utility room. It was renovated back to a bathroom approximately in 2010.

George Litts, a local antique dealer, purchased the matching stained glass windows that were located within the Menominee River Brewing Company factory in Michigan. The brewing factory windows which matched ours were destroyed in a fire at George Litts Antique storage warehouse decades ago. George did stop over one day while I was painting the outside and proposed to purchase the two existing stained glass windows from us but we countered that they were only for sale if you buy the whole building.

The dining hall, where meals were served, was used as our photography studio shooting area. There was a swinging door that lead to the dining hall from the kitchen. A 3 inch hole was bored thru one of the four door panels to allow staff in the kitchen to peer into the dining hall to determine if people were finished eating. That door was replaced with a louvered door for ventilation. The studio/dining room on the East Wall has one exterior window (under the fire Escape) and one exit door to the outside (behind Vinyl Siding) that has been blocked off but could be reopened if someone wished to add light or another exit from this room. Currently the room has 4 access door openings to other rooms. It also shares a large window which was to the outside porch but now overlooks our newer sunroom addition.

Difficulty in finding repair technicians to maintain the balance to the old one pipe steam

radiator system forced us to make another change. Installation of the current 3 zone copper pipe baseboard hot water system with a high efficiency furnace and hot water heater brought the heating system up to current standards. All new copper plumbing was installed and hidden in closets, above ceilings and anywhere they could be hidden from view. Black radiators and black galvanized stand pipes were cut out & recycled. This newest furnace was relocated to the south adjacent room that was originally used for coal piles and oil storage tanks. Once the room was cleaned out the new furnace was installed and vented thru the south side wall. Holes in the ceiling/wood floors in several areas show where the former pipes penetrated the floors/ceilings and were covered using plates to seal them once the vertical pipes were removed. Black galvanized heating pipe was removed from the basement where they interfered with ceiling height. Galvanized pipe is still hung from the floor joists in the crawl spaces even though they are disconnected from any heating supply. It was too much trouble to crawl around and remove all of them.

Every room (24) in the building have been restored since 1985. Four roofs and the damaged roof decking (6 tons) were removed to the landfill & replaced with new decking & 35 year Asphalt sculptured shingles with a ridge vent. Both chimneys and skylight were removed at this time to eliminate penetrations thru the steep roof. The flat northwest roof above bedroom 2 was pitched for better drainage, all downstairs floors were sanded and stained, all rooms wallpapered and/or painted. Vinyl siding was added to protect the exterior, seamless gutters were added all around the building in 2013 to direct water away from the building, metal clad soffit's were added all around eaves. A new porch on the Jackson street side entrance was added over the old concrete stairs for a safer entrance with a landing to the building, roof, steps and hand rails were added. The old steps were a safety hazard because you had step up to get to the door and then step down to open it and then enter. Having a landing solved the safety and access issues. Having a roof kept people dry when entering from the south. The old concrete steps are currently still under this porch structure.

During the early restoration, care was taken to maintain the look and feel of an older home but adding many modern touches inside. A 22 inch fan was added above the 2nd floor Fire Escape Exit door and the 2nd floor false ceiling area in the Hall acts as a plenum to draw out warm air and supply cross ventilation in summer. Upgrades to fire protection were supplied with portable extinguishers at entry points of the commercial section, smoke alarms above stair wells and multiple LED exit signs to direct people to the exits. Fire inspections and Fire Extinguisher maintenance has been done every year to comply with local ordinances. We are also converting standard tungsten filament bulbs to the new long life LED bulbs that use much less energy.

The Hartnell's were married in the Hotel Wausaukee Lobby on December 15th, 1990. Guest seating was set up in the lobby and the ceremony was held at the large front door/window display area. It was unusually cold and was snowing heavily. The justice of the peace Rene Burkhalter was late so we broke open the Champagne and enjoyed the wait with our guests. Occasionally I would have to go out and shovel to keep the sidewalks open. The studio area was set up with coolers for drinks and people were allowed to mill around to visit or take a tour of our hotel. My son Aaron was best man and our good friend Johanna Axelrod acted as matron of honor. Despite the snow our special day went well and everyone enjoyed themselves and we got to add to the ample history of our hotel.

Ann and Brian ran a bed and breakfast for five years with rooms 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 & 8 for rental. The office #2 space at the base of the stairs acted as a TV room/smoking lounge for the guests which allowed a more quiet area away from the sleeping rooms. Smoking was discontinued in the building the third year because the smoke tended to travel up the hallway and into the residence/rooms even with a vent fan installed in the TV room. With a shared bath in our 2nd floor hall space, the Hotel/Restaurant

regulations allowed us to have up to no more than 10 guests. The upper 2nd bath was refinished with wallpaper, ceramic tile floor, handicap toilet, sink, shower and a false ceiling. There was originally a skylight in the bathroom which faced in the wrong direction to receive any beneficial light and was a source of roof leaks. It was removed at the time we replaced the roof. The pedestal base original tub had to be removed per the inspector and replaced with a unit without faucets inside the tub rim to meet code. We chose to replace it with a standing shower stall which is still here today. The Hotel/Restaurant inspector also required us to build a double dry wall explosion proof room around the furnace area with a metal door before we could open the B&B. It was never an issue for former owners until we reapplied for a permit to open the B&B and new regulations had to be followed. Fire extinguishers and lighted exit signs were also required for the commercial areas and were added. The initial exit signs were lit with fluorescent bulbs and then in later years replaced with more efficient led units.

The B&B was open from 1991 to 1996 and served a continental breakfast in room 7 for guests which offered coffee, teas from California and muffins from Stephenson bakery. Muffins were set out on our Pine buffet set for the guests to help themselves. Coffee was on a timer to turn on at 6 am. Cooking was not an option in our establishment since the Restaurant/Hotel regulations would have forced us to build a commercial kitchen. That kitchen could then not be used by the owners for their personal kitchen once converted to commercial. Regulations seem to change when involving B&B's involving a home versus a commercial building (Hotel). Offering a continental breakfast solved that dilemma and offered a good compromise. You could bring in pre cooked food and serve it but you couldn't cook it and serve it without running afoul of the Hotel/Restaurant regulations.

Many of the guests were artists who sang, danced, painted, and played musical instruments for us as a thank you for the accommodations. We also met several people who's early family members worked for the original hotel either as help or former managers. Several times when the people checked out they would share some talent they had with us as a sign of appreciation. We had clogging demonstrations, singing, and musical concerts. Several of the patrons were grand or great grand children of people who had managed the building at some point years ago. Most were appreciative of any information we could help them with in their knowledge of their relatives history. I had an extra 16"x20" b&w print of the building I had printed from the 1940's and someone who stopped in asked if we had any prints of the building as his relatives were once managers there. I gave him the print since I had already framed one for ourselves and he went to his car and came back to the lobby with 3 CD's of the musical group he worked for in Chicago called the Pat Methany Group which was into Jazz. The CD's were meant as a payment for the print. Nice gesture but then those were the type of people we enjoyed having stay.

We had a large contingent of hunters who also came yearly for the annual deer season hunt in November. Deer were hung from the rafters in the two story barn, rifles were placed on tables set up in our basement as we did not allow guns inside the residence. All of our hunters respected our building and were appreciative of the accommodations. They typically placed their cases of beer on the fire escape balcony to keep it cold.

All profits from running the hotel helped us to add some of the needed physical improvements to our building. The B&B portion of our building was closed down to allow us to convert all the commercial space downstairs to our photography studio which was much more profitable than the B&B. The rooms upstairs were then allocated to our personal guest rooms or converted for alternate purposes.

Once the two story barn had been demolished and removed, a bulldozer was driven off the flat

bed truck trailer and he was excavating the surface where the garage was to be placed. While the driver was in the seat he noticed sand was dropping down a hole he had not seen. Turns out it was the cement access door to the septic tank below. The Caterpillar tractor had pushed off the lid of the septic and left the hole open. He had been driving his Caterpillar tractor over the top of the empty concrete septic roof. Their fix was to remove the top of the septic and back fill the whole interior with sand. They also noticed that the drain from the main building was run directly thru the walls of the septic tank. They had to make sure the drain pipe was supported with sand so the garage weight would not collapse it. Turns out we had to fix that as well a few years later. We cut into the garage floor and repaired the damaged drain pipe and then added a clean out for any future potential problems both in the garage floor and another one located just outside the sun room. A two & 1/2 car garage was set back into the property with its asphalt apron and higher elevation. Extensive landscaping, patio decking and stockade fencing were added for privacy and comfort over the years. The patio and garage elevations were increased in height to allow proper water drainage away from the home. In the old days water would pool between the back porch and the two story barn so fixing that problem has created a much drier area to access the patio/garage.

Originally there was just a slanted roof over the Kitchen back door with two posts holding up the roof and nothing blocking the wind. The four season room added 179 square feet of living space adjacent to the kitchen and offers a buffer from the northeast winds that always made the kitchen cold. The sun room occupies approximately the same physical area as the concrete slab that originally represented the base for the over hanging roof. Now that living space is a relaxing retreat for dining and entertaining. It is heated by a wall mounted natural gas space heater and used whenever necessary to bring the room up to a comfortable temperature. Mounted to the North wall of the sun room is a CO2 detector for safe operation of the space heater. The sidewalk just outside the Kitchen door was also where the water pooled after storms and the whole area was regraded to raise the level and a 23' x 23'5" paver brick patio was installed from sun porch to garage making this an ideal outdoor sitting area. An electric line with a ground fault receptacle is run under ground to the patio allowing us to run a water feature or any other device requiring electric.

When the village of Wausauke built their new Water Treatment facility, all wells in the Village of Wausauke were ordered to be closed off and inspected. Our well was not functional but cement was added to the well pipe to block the well and then capped after inspection. The Red Asphalt shingle well house building that used to be on the concrete base had long been torn down and the base only serves to hold building supplies. We did opt to allow a second water meter to be added to a water line going to the outside of the sunporch which is used for watering plants. This allows you to use water outside but not have to pay for sewer charges since it is going directly into the ground.

The last major renovation was a complete gut & remodel of the kitchen from inconvenient to a modern floor plan. Walls were stripped to studs in areas, flooring was stripped down to sub floor, all cabinets/counters removed. Gas, Electric and plumbing appliances were all re-routed for more efficiency, new sub floor installed, maple wood flooring was installed, heating pipes were installed under the joists of the kitchen floor, new tall hickory cabinets with self closing drawers & free standing pantry, Silestone counters added, under counter sink with Moen retracting faucet, glass tile back splash, LED under and above cabinet lighting, multiple ground fault outlets were added, removed one non functional doorway to another room, created a framed trap door to basement with recessed latch and a two chair counter with overhang was created above the drawers next to the stove for preparation of food, dining or other uses. Dishwasher, garbage disposer, built in microwave above stove, pull out drawer for garbage/recycling adjacent to stove all make this a much more modern and functional kitchen. We had the wall surfaces sprayed for a texture and then painted before everything went in. The

door that led from the kitchen to the sunroom was also removed as it was no longer needed.

At the same time the Kitchen was being remodeled, improvements were made to the commercial space. Four 35"x 53" double pane windows were installed to replace the 1889 single pane glass. The exterior one board wall panels beneath these windows were built out and insulated. The Jackson Ave and the front & middle doors along Hwy 141 were replaced with windowed insulated swing out doors that added light to the hallways and lobby and met the newer building codes. Plate glass sheets were mounted in front of the stain glass windows to prevent road damage from flying rocks. The door at the second floor fire escape was also replaced with an insulated door that has a window to add light to the hallway.

Only two trees, raspberries, some garden space and minor shrubs were originally on the property at the time of Ann's purchase in 1985. All landscaping has been done by the current owners over the last 30 years to create flower, edible gardens and fruit trees/bushes. Two Cherry, Apple, Raspberry, Rhubarb, Gooseberries, grapes are some of the fruit bearing foliage. Landscape boulders were brought in to create a sitting area for photography just east of the garage and a landscape boulder featured on the northwest corner of the property.

A retaining wall of 100 - 3 foot cedar posts was created to eliminate the steep grassy slope on the Hwy 141 sidewalk. The Cedar posts were rotting over 12 years and was later removed and replaced by the current lockable red tile retaining wall. This prevents damage from snow plowing done on the sidewalk in the Winter, easier grass cutting and acts as a sitting area for those watching the 4th of July parades.

On the North there is an old retaining wall that was constructed when the original building was put up and covers approximately ½ of the length of the north property line. A second 6 foot retaining block wall was built to eliminate the back properties steep grassy slope and creates approximately 400 sq ft of additional yard as we back filled this area with grass clippings and other degradable yard waste. No fencing was originally on the property and the Cedar stockade fencing was built all around the current yard for privacy. Three gates allow access from Jackson Ave, the alley on the east and on the west to Hwy 141 for maintenance and access from those three sides. The north property lines raised retaining walls separate us from the much lower elevation of the adjacent property.

Spruce Hedges were added to create a visual buffer on the Hwy 141 side of the property and in front of the windows on the Jackson Ave side. One of the original large pines on this property directly behind the garage was cut down due to damage to the root system when the base for the garage was excavated. For safety sake the tree was felled and a trunk section was left to offer a shelf for outside decorations. Another very large Maple that we had planted numerous years earlier on the west offered incredible color in the fall and lots of shade to the west section of our yard. Several lightning strikes from two different storms felled two large sections of the crown compromising the tree and it was also removed. The last section of the tree that came down during the storm just narrowly missed the northwest yard shed but branches were on the roof and the major limb section just in front of the door.