

Kosciusko Leadership Academy (KLA) Project

Information Update for the Community

Winona Lake Restoration

- Back to the Future

By Steve Barrett and Dan Gehrke

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Information for newspaper article:

Winona Lake Restoration - Back to the Future

By Steve Barrett and Dan Gehrke Kosciusko Leadership Academy (KLA)

Imagine, if you will, the time period of the early 1900's when the Winona Lake area was home during the summer to a quarter of a million visitors. People flocked to the area during the summer to enjoy the Chautauqua experience.

Many educational and cultural events were offered, as well as access to the relaxation and entertainment facilities present in Winona Lake at that time. In fact, the scenery and architecture alone were incentive enough to draw some to visit.

Now imagine, plans that would take some of that same property in Winona Lake, including the old Winona Lake Assembly Grounds and Hotel, and turn it into a somewhat similar 'gathering' place. No fee would be charged to enter and people would again see the area as a place to relive a piece of history, while enjoying the architecture and grounds that are so much a part of Winona Lake's character.

Now, forget the imagination part! All this is being done today within the framework of building community in the town of Winona Lake. Through plans put in place by the Winona Restoration Company, changes are taking place right now that are "preserving the past while restoring the future" for the area.

Comprised of partners Brent Wilcoxson and Dane Miller (both from Winona Lake), the company has put into motion a master plan that when complete, will restore many of the old buildings and grounds to the historic architecture of times past. In an interview with Wilcoxson, he outlined much of the plan for the area.

In addition to the overall master plan for site development, several other project goals and objectives have been identified. The overall goal is to develop a cultural and recreational center based on the model of Lake Chautauqua, New York. Additional opportunities for cultural arts and lecture programming will be considered, as well as commercial components to service the visitors and support the other parts of the project.

Building on the fact that the town is listed as a historic district on the National Register of Historic Places, the plans include supporting promotion of that designation.

If you take a casual drive today along Park Avenue in Winona Lake, here are a few things you might begin to see taking shape.

As you enter the town, the first building you notice is the hotel. There are plans to renovate the structure, creating 26 upscale rooms and limited meeting rooms space. The exterior design includes adding back on the porches and other exterior architectural character of the building.

As you travel on, changes to the lakefront and park like areas of the assembly grounds will be minimized to maintain the extensive open space for community use and enjoyment. Fountains will be restored and walkways added to improve pedestrian enjoyment.

Further down the avenue, plans include reconstructing the former boathouse/roller rink area into a casual style restaurant facility with a panoramic lake view.

The current post office facility will remain, but the building will be modified to blend in with the planned changes.

Development of a commercial center with an emphasis on artist/artisans' galleries will line the canal at the base of Ninth Street hill. Glass cutting, pottery, wood shops, weaving, and art galleries, plus locations for bakery, fine chocolates, specialty coffee's, and other shops are being considered.

The current historic homes are being renovated to house these studios and a central village green area will act as the focal point for this section.

At the end of the area is the Billy Sunday Home, which has been identified as a historic site by the State of Indiana. Future plans include supporting the potential influx of visitors that would also be attracted to this site.

Other plans for the project include looking to establish either a summer music school providing a masters type program, and/or a similar conservative business school providing seminars, lecture series, or classroom symposium.

According to Wilcoxson, timing for the completion of the construction projects is in a phase in approach, with at least 4 shops and most of the grounds restoration complete by mid-summer. The balance of the gallery shops should be done by June 1999. The boathouse restaurant is scheduled for April 1999 completion, and the hotel renovation by April of 2000.

Wilcoxson went on to describe that the financial impact to the area will occur in a number of ways. By taking the assembly property off exempt tax status and putting back on the rolls, an immediate \$38,000 was put back into a TIF district for usage on improvements to the area. Ultimate estimates are for a \$75,000 increase in tax revenue.

Other financial benefits should be seen on appraisal values of contiguous properties, dollars that will turn in the recycling of funds spent on improvements, tourism revenue should increase, an estimated 70 jobs will be ultimately be added, plus other ancillary dollars that will be generated.

As you can see, much is being planned, all within the context of strengthening the overall community of Winona Lake. In looking back, while planning to the future, the area is in store for some significant change in restoring its past.

**Example of One of the Restoration Projects:
Former Administration Building
Located on Park Avenue at the turn for Administration Blvd.**

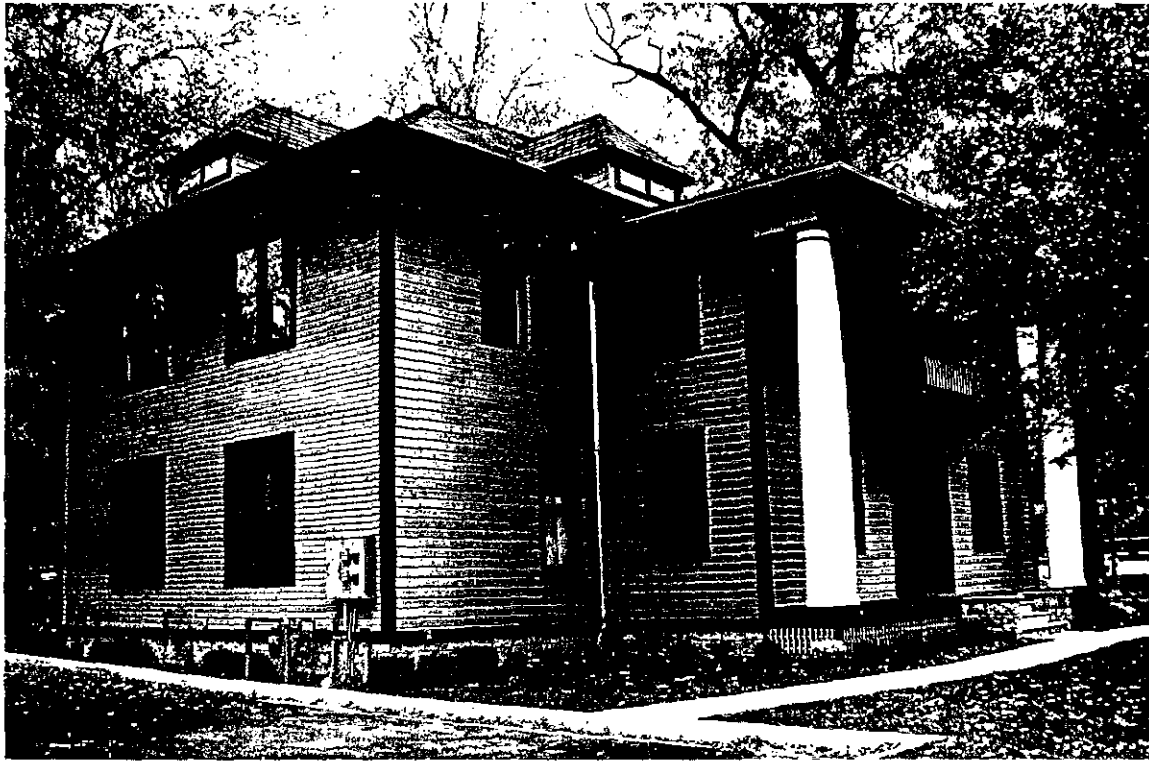


Picture from early 1900's ↑

Picture of work in progress ↓



Same Administration Bldg. After Restoration:



RESTORE HOTEL, MAINTAINING HISTORIC CHARACTER - RESTORE PORCHES, PORCHES, TURRETS, COLOR AND DETAIL

WALK CONNECTION BETWEEN HOTEL AND WATERFRONT
 WATERFRONT OVERLOOK

CLOSE OFF CHRISTY AVE. BETWEEN FIRST ST. AND PAUL AVE. TO STOP TRAFFIC FROM AT THE INTERSECTION OF PAUL AVE AND NINE AVE. AND KEEP THROUGH TRAFFIC OFF OF CHRISTY.

WINONA LAKE

LAKE WATERFRONT - ACCESSIBLE TO COMMUNITY - PAVING LEC

PRESERVE CHURCH CHARACTER OF NATIVE CANOPY TREES AND LAWN

BOARDWALK
 ARRIVAL/DROP-OFF

BOATHOUSE RENOVATION OR RECONSTRUCTION RESTORING HISTORIC CHARACTER FOR NEW RESTAURANT

ANNUAL BOAT OCCASION
 FORMAL COFFEE SHOP/BAKERY

SPECIALTY SHOP:
 • ARTS AND CRAFTS, STUFFS, ETC.
 • DEVELOP IN ARCHITECTURAL RESOURCES HISTORIC CHARACTER & RESIDENTIAL SCALE

RECREATION FACILITY
 ROAD CLOSED TO AUTOMOBILES
 BENCHES & LIGHTS

AUDITORIUM

THE ALLEY SERVES AS BOTH PEDESTRIAN AND SERVICE ALLEYS

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT:
 • EXTEND RETAIL SHOPS, RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT OR MIXED USE TO THE MARKET PLAZA
 • MAINTAIN HISTORIC CHARACTER AND RESIDENTIAL SCALE

CANAL
 • PROVIDES AMENITY
 • IMPROVE AESTHETIC QUALITY BY RESTORATION & INCREASING DEPTH

COMMUNITY PARK

RECONSTRUCT AMPHITHEATRE
 RECONSTRUCT WALKWAY
 RECONSTRUCT WALKWAY
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HISTORIC HOTEL RENOVATION BY COLLEGE

STRENGTHEN CONNECTION BETWEEN COMMUNITY & CHURCH AND TERMINATE EAST/WEST AXIS WITH NEW VILLAGE GREENS & PATH. LEC AT TERMINUS OF 20' TREE

RESTORED BRIDGE/FOUNTAIN TERMINATES EAST/WEST WALK CONNECTION TO CANAL

DAILY SUNDAY VISITOR CENTER AND BUS DROP-OFF

DAILY SUNDAY HISTORIC HOME

RESTORED GROTTO ARCHES SOUTHERN TERMINUS OF WALKWAY



0' 50' 100' 200'

SUMMARY PLAN

Winona Lake Assembly Grounds

WINONA RESTORATION COMPANY
 Winona Lake, Indiana

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