

Aurora University  
1419 Prairie Street  
Aurora  
Kane County  
Illinois

HIBS No. K-2021-1-7

Written Description  
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Illinois State Historic Preservation Office  
1 Old State Capitol Plaza  
Springfield, Illinois 62701

## ILLINOIS HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

### AURORA UNIVERSITY BUILDING

- Location: 1419 Prairie Street, Aurora, Kane County, Illinois 60506
- Present Owner: Aurora University  
347 South Gladstone Avenue, Aurora, Kane County, Illinois 60506
- Present Use: Construction Field Office
- Significance: The property at 1419 Prairie Street is an example of a Mid-Twentieth Century Ranch home.

#### PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

##### A. Physical History

###### 1. Date(s) of Construction:

The residence at 1419 Prairie Street was constructed in circa 1962.

###### 2. Architects:

N. S. Abens & Son, Contractor

###### 3. Original and Subsequent Owners:

Mackenzie and Ruth S. Macintyre (1961-1981)

The Northern Trust Company, Trustee (1981-1985)

Townsend L. Way, Jr. and Elsie Way/T. Lawrence Way III, Executor  
(1985-2016)

Aurora University (2016-present)

###### 4. Original plans and construction:

N. S. Abens & Son (Contractor)– “Erect a one-family residence with garage” (Permit No. D920), 26 July 1962.

5. Alterations and additions:

The residence has been divided into multiple offices for use by the construction company that was occupying it at the time of survey. In addition, some wide doors had been modified to fit standard interior doors.

B. Historical Context

1. Kane County, Aurora Township, and the City of Aurora:

Kane County is located in northeastern Illinois, bordered on the north by McHenry County, on the east by Cook and DuPage, on the south by Kendall, and on the west by DeKalb County. The Fox River runs the length of eastern Kane County, fed by numerous tributaries including Tyler, Ferson, Blackberry, Big Rock, and Mill Creeks from the west, and Brewster, Norton, and Indian Creeks from the east. Streams in the northwestern townships such as Burlington and Hampshire flow into the Rock River. Early settlers in eastern Kane County, especially along the Fox, encountered large tracts of timber, which were dubbed the “Big Woods” in Batavia and Aurora Townships, and “Little Woods” in St. Charles Township. The well-fed Fox River was an excellent source of water power and the largely limestone bed provided a solid foundation for numerous dams constructed along its route through the county. Early settlers harnessed this water power to operate grist and saw mills, and soon villages were established along the Fox River including Dundee, Elgin, St. Charles, Geneva, Batavia, and Aurora.<sup>1</sup>

The first Euro-American to settle in Kane County was reputedly Christopher Payne, a native of New York State, who arrived in 1832 and began farming land in Batavia Township near the area known as the Big Woods. Daniel S. Haight located on the Fox River near Geneva in June 1833 but left and returned the following year. As elsewhere in Illinois, these early pioneers settled around timbered groves that provided fuel, building material, game, and shelter for livestock. The underlying soils were also more easily worked than those of the prairie. Only after the development of the self-scouring plow, first widely available in the 1840s, were the open prairies more

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<sup>1</sup> Beers, Leggett & Co., *Biographical and Historical Record of Kane County, Illinois* (Chicago: Beers, Leggett & Co., 1888); Wm. Le Baron Jr. & Co., *The Past and Present of Kane County, Illinois* (Chicago: Wm. Le Baron & Co., 1878).

fully utilized.<sup>2</sup> Settlement was interrupted in 1832 and 1833 by the Black Hawk War but resumed following the removal of Native Americans west of the Mississippi River. The government surveys of Kane County were conducted in 1839 and 1840, and the lands came into market in 1842. The 1830s and 1840s saw the prairie-dominated central and western portions of the county become settled and cultivated. New York State provided a large percentage of early settlers in Kane County, but many families migrated from New England and the Mid-Atlantic States, Ohio, Indiana, and southern Illinois, as well as the British Isles and northern Europe.<sup>3</sup>

Kane County was organized in 1836, having previously been part of La Salle County. It originally included the whole of present-day DeKalb County and the northern tier of townships in Kendall County. It was reduced to its present limits by the formation of DeKalb County in 1837 and Kendall County in 1841. During this period, the county was divided into nine voting precincts, but by 1847, the precincts of Kane County were arranged to contain a single congressional township. With the adoption of township organization in 1850, the county commissioners elected a board of supervisors, which established 16 congressional townships, adjusted a few borders, and organized the political structure of the county as it exists today. The total population of Kane County increased from about 17,000 in 1850 to almost 45,000 by 1880. The major towns in the county were located along the Fox River, anchored by Elgin on the north and Aurora on the south. Aurora, home of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad, soon became the largest town in the county with a population of 11,873 in 1880.<sup>4</sup>

Aurora Township is located in the southeast corner of Kane County and encompasses congressional Township 38 North, Range 8 East. It is bordered on the west by Sugar Grove Township, on the north by Batavia Township, on the east by Du Page County, and on the south by Kendall County. The Fox River flows north to south through the center of the township, in many areas over exposed limestone. Quarried limestone, and an abundance of high-quality clay for bricks and tiles, provided ample material to early settlers for buildings and other construction projects. In addition to possessing excellent farming

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<sup>2</sup> John Mack Faragher, *Sugar Creek: Life on the Illinois Prairie* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).

<sup>3</sup> Beers, Leggett & Co., *Biographical and Historical Record of Kane County, Illinois*.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*; United States Census Bureau, *Population Census of Kane County, Illinois* (1850); United States Census Bureau, *Population Census of Kane County, Illinois* (1880).

soils, much of northern Aurora Township contained large timbered tracts known in the early days as the “Big Woods”.<sup>5</sup> Many early settlers cleared the timber to cultivate the rich soils, but others, recognizing the value of wood as a source of fuel and shelter, invested in small acreage “wood lots” from which trees were harvested and sold as raw materials. Euro-American settlement commenced following the end of the Black Hawk conflict and the completion of the Chicago & Galena Stage Road through the township in 1833. That same year Jacob Carpenter arrived from Ohio and built a log-house east of the Fox River near the stage road crossing, at present-day Montgomery. Carpenter was joined in 1834 by his father-in-law Elijah Pierce, whose house on the Fox River became a tavern, hotel and station on the Chicago & Galena stage road. Daniel Gray came from Montgomery County, New York in 1835 and built a frame house on the west bank of the river, across from Jacob Carpenter and Elijah Pierce. Gray named the new village Montgomery and for many years he played a prominent role in the commercial development of the community. Other names associated with the early settlement of Aurora Township include Isaac Van Fleet at Aurora in 1833, and John Peter Schneider at North Aurora in 1834. By 1837 farms had been established throughout the township by, among others, Ashbel Culver, Frederick Stolp, David Crane, Daniel Gray, Nicholas Gray, Lyman Isbell, and P. Y. Bliss. The area of the present Township formed part of the Fox River Precinct from 1835 to 1850, when Kane County adopted township organization and Aurora Township was established.<sup>6</sup>

Joseph McCarty came from Elmira, New York in 1834 and claimed 460 acres on both sides of the Fox River where the City of Aurora now lies. Joseph and his brother Samuel constructed a dam across the river at present-day Stolp Island and the Village of McCarty Mills was soon established. The original 1835 village plat by Joseph and Samuel McCarty was sited on the east bank of the Fox River. As people began settling close to the river and the mill, the area became more densely populated. When an alternate stage route was established across the Fox River near McCarty’s Mills, a post-office was opened in 1837 and McCarty’s Mills was re-named Aurora. The post office, operated by Samuel McCarty, helped strengthen the connection between Aurora and the boom-towns of Chicago to the east and Galena to the west. Despite the destructive effects of periodic flooding, the river provided

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<sup>5</sup> Beers, Leggett & Co., *Biographical and Historical Record of Kane County, Illinois*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*; “History of Montgomery”, Village of Montgomery, Illinois, accessed 20 February 2019, <https://ci.montgomery.il.us>.

water power for textile mills, grist mills, and early factories. Incorporated in 1843, the Town of Aurora was quickly becoming a thriving manufacturing center.<sup>7</sup> The west side of the Fox River was initially settled by brothers Theodore and Zaphna Lake, from New York, who purchased land along the river in 1835. In 1842, together with Theodore's wife, Esther S. Lake, they platted the Village of West Aurora, which incorporated in 1854. Industries on both sides of the river took advantage of the water power generated by the dam and falls at Stolp Island and a commercial center quickly developed, much of it on the east side and on Stolp Island. In 1855 the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad (CB&Q) established its offices and yards for the Chicago area at Aurora on the more populous east side of the Fox River. These shops included a round-house with stalls for thirty engines, a machine shop, the car shop proper, a paint shop, and a carpenter shop. Workers and their families, many of them eastern European immigrants, flocked to Aurora and settled near the rail yards and rail car shops where generations of families found employment.<sup>8</sup> The less populated but developing west side took on a more affluent character as educated Yankee stock arrived to build fine homes and fill professional and managerial positions at CB&Q and other Aurora industries. In 1857 the Villages of Aurora and West Aurora united and were incorporated as the City of Aurora. To ease political tensions over the union, civic offices were located on Stolp Island in the river, ward boundaries were defined by the river, and the mayor of Aurora was elected from alternate sides of the river until 1913. Over the next several decades Aurora became a prosperous railroad town, but also developed a highly industrialized economy based in part on the manufacture of heavy-machine building equipment.<sup>9</sup> Aurora was socially progressive regarding education, religion, welfare, and the position of women in society. Aurora's civic leaders openly supported the abolitionist movement and ethnic diversity, welcoming a variety of European immigrants and, after about 1910, a sizeable influx of migrants from Mexico seeking employment and housing.<sup>10</sup> Following World War II, Aurora's manufacturing base remained strong, attracting new businesses and workers, but the 1980s brought an economic downturn, the closing of many factories and businesses, and high unemployment. During the 1990s and early 2000s, initiatives to

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<sup>7</sup> "The Electronic Encyclopedia of Chicago: Aurora IL", Chicago Historical Society, accessed 22 February 2019, <http://www.encyclopedia.chicagohistory.org>.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.; "Historic Districts and Landmarks Guidelines", City of Aurora, accessed 2-27 February 2019, <http://www.aurora-il.org>.

<sup>9</sup> "The Electronic Encyclopedia of Chicago: Aurora IL"; "Historic Districts and Landmarks Guidelines".

<sup>10</sup> "The Electronic Encyclopedia of Chicago: Aurora IL"; "Historic Districts and Landmarks Guidelines".

revitalize the downtown, and the development of new residential communities and mixed-use business parks, resulted in job growth and increased population. Today the City of Aurora is ranked as the second largest city in Illinois after Chicago.<sup>11</sup>

As Aurora's population increased and west side residential neighborhoods slowly expanded west, speculators and developers began buying up tracts of unincorporated township land. Subdivisions were platted and annexed as Additions to the city. The dividing line between the northwest side and the southwest side was the Chicago-Galena Road running slightly northwest from the river through the near west side of Aurora into unincorporated Aurora and Sugar Grove townships. In 1890 the New Downer Place Subdivision was platted on the west edge of Aurora in the east half of Section 20, bordered on the north by Galena Road (now Galena Boulevard) and on the south by Prairie Street, essentially an east-west country road on the section line between Section 20 and Section 29 to the south. The NW ¼ of Section 29 had originally been purchased in 1844 by Edward Lawton.<sup>12</sup> It was Lawton, and neighbor Gus Aucutt, who in the 1870s laid out the intersection of what became Prairie Street and Edgelawn Drive at the northwest corner of the Lawton property. The land changed hands several times and in 1914 the Aurora Country Club purchased all but the NE ¼ of the NW ¼ of Section 29 from Frank Minard.<sup>13</sup> The NE ¼ of the NW ¼ was owned by Truman and Mardula Day, who also owned 89 acres and a farmstead in the south half of the SW ¼ of Section 20, north of Prairie Street, where the Country Club Estates sub-division was platted in 1926. The Day family leased the NE ¼ of the NW ¼ of Section 29 to the Aurora Country Club, allowed the land to be developed as part of an 18-hole golf course, and eventually sold it to the club in 1925.<sup>14</sup> The 18-hole golf course was designed by Scottish course designer and landscape architect Thomas Bendelow, who designed the renowned Medina Country Club, and William Boise Langford, a Chicago native who helped design over 200 golf courses in Illinois and across the Midwest. The original Lawton stone farmhouse in the west half of the property was remodeled and served as the clubhouse until it burned down in 1941.<sup>15</sup> By 1910 the City of Aurora was poised for expansion into township land west toward

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<sup>11</sup> "The Electronic Encyclopedia of Chicago: Aurora IL"; "Historic Districts and Landmarks Guidelines".

<sup>12</sup> Kane County Recorder Grantor-Grantee Index, Book 8, p. 29.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, Book 580, p. 175.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, Book 840, p. 133.

<sup>15</sup> "Aurora Country Club", Aurora Country Club, accessed 1 February 2019, <https://www.aeccountryclub.com>.

Edgelawn from Prairie Street on the south to the Galena Road on the north.

While development along the Galena Road corridor and the platting of residential subdivisions such as New Downer Place increased land speculation west of Aurora, expected growth out to Edgelawn progressed slowly. By 1910 many blocks and lots on the west side of New Downer Place subdivision remained unsold and undeveloped. About that time, Mendota College, a private institution founded by Adventist Christians about fifty miles west of Aurora, in Mendota, Illinois, was looking to establish a new campus in a more populous and accessible location. The west side of Aurora was promoted to the college by Aurora civic leaders who saw the economic and cultural benefits of being home to an institution of higher learning, and land was available and ready to be developed. In June 1911, Mendota College acquired all of Blocks 33 and 34 on the west edge of New Downer Place subdivision from William George, a Trustee with the Old Second Bank of Aurora.<sup>16</sup> Construction commenced at once and, in October 1911, Mendota College was formally incorporated as Aurora College.<sup>17</sup>

## 2. Aurora University:

Aurora University was founded in 1893 by the Western Advent Christian Publication Association as Mendota Seminary, in Mendota, LaSalle County, Illinois. Initially, Bible Training courses were developed and offered to prepare graduating students for lives and careers in Christian ministry. J. Oscar Campbell served as the first president of the institution. The seminary opened with three students and grew to 31 students by the end of the first Winter Term. Six months after the Seminary opened, it was renamed Mendota College and the curriculum was expanded to include courses offered in the Preparatory, Academical, Musical, Art, and Commercial Departments. The College was sustained financially by tuitions and fees, as well as the fund-raising efforts of The Helper's Union, founded in 1894 by Advent Christian women to provide food, furniture and other household goods, and funds as they were needed. In 1910, the Mendota College seal was designed by then college president B. J. Dean and was used for the first time on the college catalogue issued that same year. The seal contained an inner circle embossed with

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<sup>16</sup> Kane County Recorder Grantor-Grantee Index, Book 531, p. 366-67.

<sup>17</sup> "Aurora University's History", Aurora University, accessed 11 January 2019, <https://aurora.edu>.

images of a book, a scroll, and a torch surrounded by the Latin inscription “The wise man treasures knowledge”. The outer rim contained the name Mendota College with the founding year of 1893 written in roman numerals.<sup>18</sup>

In 1910 Mendota College administrators, wishing to broaden the college’s academic mission and increase enrollment, sought to relocate the campus from rural Mendota to a more populous area. As an inducement to locate near Aurora, William George of the Old Second Bank of Aurora, Trustee donated Block 33 in the New Downer Place subdivision, five acres, for a new college campus.<sup>19</sup> A letter from a college official indicated that by May 1910 there already existed a drawing of the proposed main college building.<sup>20</sup> In May or June 1911, the college purchased a second block, Block 34, at a discounted rate from William and Alice M. George. Both acquisitions were filed with the Kane County Recorder’s Office as Warranty Deeds dated 1 June 1911.<sup>21</sup> Blocks 33 and 34 were on the undeveloped west side of the subdivision, which at that time was still in unincorporated Aurora Township. On 31 May 1911, President Orrin Roe Jenks conducted a groundbreaking ceremony for the main building, Eckhart Hall.<sup>22</sup> The architect for the project was C. W. Webster, and the contractor was James Todd, an Adventist Christian, of Chicago. The three-story brick and limestone building, with an elevated basement level, was designed “after the old English style of architecture as employed at Oxford and Cambridge, and recently at the University of Chicago”. Above the east-facing front entrance of the English Tudor Revival building was placed a stone slab inscribed “Eckhart Hall of Liberal Arts”.<sup>23</sup> Flanking Eckhart Hall to the northwest and to the southwest are, respectively, Wilkinson Hall, a men’s dormitory building, and Davis Hall, a women’s dormitory building. All three buildings feature red-tile roofs as stipulated by benefactor Charles Eckhart, an Advent Christian who donated \$40,000 to the college of which \$10,000 was used to furnish Eckhart Hall and to appoint Davis and Wilkerson

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.; “AU Historical Timeline”, Aurora University, accessed 13 January 2019, <https://aurora.edu>.

<sup>19</sup> Kane County Recorder Grantor-Grantee Index, Book 367, p. 46-8.

<sup>20</sup> National Park Service, *National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form: Aurora College Complex*, accessed 19 February 2019, <http://gis.hpa.state.il.us>.

<sup>21</sup> Kane County Recorder Grantor-Grantee Index, Book 531, p. 366-67.

<sup>22</sup> “AU Today: Ties to the past, eyes to the future”, Aurora University, accessed 15 February 2019, <https://news.aurora.edu>; “AU Historical Timeline”.

<sup>23</sup> “AU Today: Ties to the past, eyes to the future”.; National Park Service, *National Register of Historic Places Inventory-Nomination Form: Aurora College Complex*.

Halls.<sup>24</sup> Although the completion date was projected to be in October 1911, the interiors of the buildings were not completed until early 1912 and classes started for the Spring semester on 4 April 1912. Nevertheless, the institution was formally incorporated as Aurora College in October 1911, and the wording on the official college seal was changed from Mendota College to Aurora College.<sup>25</sup> More than a decade later, on 15 July 1923, the New Downer Place Addition, and thus the Aurora College campus, was annexed to the City of Aurora.<sup>26</sup>

In May 1926, the college purchased approximately six acres of land in the northeast corner of the S ½ of the SW ¼ of Section 20, Aurora Township, from El Louise Schoeberlein.<sup>27</sup> Schoeberlein sold the balance of the S ½ of the SW ¼ at about the same time to developer Fred J. Walsh. By the 1950s Aurora College owned most of the property between Southlawn Place on the south, Evanslawn Avenue on the west, and just north of Marseillaise Place on the north. In 1954, by an ordinance of the City of Aurora, portions of Kenilworth Place and Glenwood Place within that property were vacated “by reason of the fact that Aurora College requests the vacation of said streets for the ordinary development of its campus”.<sup>28</sup> In the mid-1950s Campus Facilities took major steps to meet the growing demand for on-campus housing with an addition to Davis Hall and the construction of Memorial Hall in 1955 and Jenks Hall in 1957. In 1959 A new home for baseball, Snell Field, was dedicated in memory of Coach Percy Snell, the first coach hired by Aurora College. The field hosted baseball games on the southwest corner of campus for nearly 50 years. The campus continued to grow with the construction in 1962 of Stephens Hall of Science and the Charles B. Phillips Library. In December 1966, blocks of Calumet Avenue, Kenilworth Place, and South Randall Road running through campus were closed and removed, creating a physically unified campus, and two new parking lots were built on the north and south ends of campus. In 1970 two new buildings were dedicated: Watkins Hall, a residence hall; and Alumni Hall, where the college’s Athletics Programs were housed, replacing the long-standing Quonset huts that had served as the gymnasium. Perry Theater was constructed in 1978 and renovated in 2006 through a generous grant from the Community Foundation of the Fox River Valley. The state-of-the-art theater stages live theatrical

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<sup>24</sup> “AU Today: Ties to the past, eyes to the future”.

<sup>25</sup> “AU Historical Timeline”.

<sup>26</sup> Kane County Recorder Doc. #69788.; Kane County Recorder Grantor-Grantee Index, Book 706, p. 617.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, Book 807, p. 97, 404.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, Book 1711, p. 153.

productions and hosts community-wide events addressing the arts, human services, education, and business.<sup>29</sup>

Over time, Aurora College expanded and adapted its academic programs to serve the needs of the surrounding community. In 1930 the Illinois Department of Public Instruction authorized Aurora College to train elementary and secondary school teachers, marking the beginning of one of the institution's most successful and long-standing academic programs. In 1947 Aurora College introduced an innovative evening degree program, featuring flexible schedules to allow returning war veterans to earn a college degree while working full-time jobs.<sup>30</sup> After decades of growth and expansion of academic programs, the institution changed its name in 1985 from Aurora College to Aurora University, and graduate programs were offered for the first time in Education and Business. A year later George Williams College, located in Downers Grove, Illinois, closed and transferred its Social Work and Leisure and Recreation Administration (LERA) programs to Aurora University.<sup>31</sup> In 1989 Aurora University received the largest single donation in its history from Martha Dunham Schingoethe for the construction of Dunham Hall. The George Williams College of Aurora University was established in 1993 and soon encompassed the School of Education, the School of Physical Education and Recreation Administration, and the School of Social Work. The Geneva Lake campus of George Williams College began a period of expansion and renovation in 1997, with the acquisition of 91 additional acres of land, the establishment of a new conference center, and enhancements to existing facilities.<sup>32</sup> A new era was begun with the inauguration in 2000 of the 13<sup>th</sup> President of Aurora University, Rebecca L. Sherrick, who promised to “put students first”. The university reached an important milestone in academic program development with the launch of the Doctor of Education degree, the first doctoral program in the institution's history. On the George Williams College campus, the summer performing arts festival Music by the Lake was restored to great acclaim. In 2001 the Wackerlin Center for Faith and Action was established, thanks to a generous bequest from Helena Zentmyer Wackerlin, a 1914 alumna of Aurora College. In 2003 Aurora University received a \$10 million federal grant to create the Institute for Collaboration. The building was opened

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<sup>29</sup> “Facilities”, Aurora University, accessed 15 February 2019, <https://aurora.edu>.

<sup>30</sup> “AU Historical Timeline”.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*; “George William College of Aurora University”, Aurora University, accessed 20 January 2019, <https://gwc.aurora.edu>.

<sup>32</sup> “AU Historical Timeline”; “George William College of Aurora University”.

two years later and is today the home to the School of Education, the Partnership School, and the local nonprofit organization Communities in Schools. As the university reclaimed its historically-strong undergraduate identity, new programs were added in art, museum studies, religion, special education and theater. The university once again opened its doors to the community with the establishment of the new Celebrating Arts & Ideas series, which offered performing arts and educational events free of charge. Programs were added leading to the Master of Science in Nursing, the Master of Special Education, and Doctor of Social Work degrees. By fall of 2010, total enrollment at Aurora University reached 4,300 students.<sup>33</sup>

### 3. Country Club Estates:

The properties on Southlawn Drive, South Randall Avenue, and Prairie Avenue in the Country Club Estates Subdivision are all located in the SE ¼ of the SW ¼ of Section 20, Township 38 North, Range 8 East. In June 1842, Silas Hardy Baldwin purchased the SW ¼ of Section 20 from the Federal Government, then sold the south half of the SW ¼, 89 acres, to Charles Goodwin.<sup>34</sup> In 1847 Charles Goodwin sold the south half of the SW ¼ of Section 20 to Robert Miller.<sup>35</sup> In November 1847, Denison K. Town et al., representing the Miller and Goodwin families, sold the south half of the SW ¼ of Section 20 to Oresmus D. Day.<sup>36</sup> In 1862, Abigail Day, widow of Oresmus, sold the same 89 acres to her son Ezra S. Day.<sup>37</sup> In 1887, Ezra's son Truman, and Edith Day, conveyed half ownership in the south 89 acres in Section 20 to Truman's mother, Mardula Day.<sup>38</sup> Truman Day died in 1906 and Mardula Day died in 1909. In their probate inventories, filed with the Kane County Clerk, both willed their half interests in the south 89 acres of the SW ¼ of Section 20 to Truman and Edith Day's married only daughter El Louise (Day) Loser.<sup>39</sup> There ensued a period from 1909 to 1925 when no land transactions were recorded in the SW ¼ of Section 20. The land deed record resumed in 1925 and 1926 with several landowners selling various tracts to Fred J. Walsh, a resident of Joliet, Illinois. One of those land owners was El Louise Schoeberlein who, by warranty deeds signed 15 April 1926, sold the south half of

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<sup>33</sup> "AU Historical Timeline".

<sup>34</sup> Kane County Recorder Grantor-Grantee Index, Book 2, p. 324.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, Book 10, p. 209.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, Book 11, p. 180.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, Book 75, p. 77.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, Book 281, p. 338.

<sup>39</sup> Kane County Recorder Grantor-Grantee Probate Inventory, Book 3, p. 236.; *Ibid.*, Book 6, p. 39.

the SW ¼ of Section 20 to Fred J. Walsh, excepting approximately 6 acres in the northeast corner that she sold at about the same time to Aurora College.<sup>40</sup> In two affidavits signed in 1926 and 1930, El Louise Schoeberlein explained that she was the same person named as El Louise Loser in the Last Will and Testaments of Truman H. Day and Mardula Day, and that upon the deaths of her father in 1906 and her grandmother in 1909 she had inherited sole ownership of the south 89.03 acres of the SW ¼ of Section 20, the same property having been in her family for many years and occupied by herself, her father, and her grandfather.<sup>41</sup> The land on which Country Club Estates and a portion of Aurora College were developed in the 1920s and 1930s was owned by the Day family from 1847 until it was sold to Fred J. Walsh in 1926.

4. 1419 Prairie Street:

The property at 1419 Prairie Street occupies the East Half of Lot 22 and all of Lot 23 in Country Club Estates, City of Aurora, in Kane County, Illinois. Country Club Estates was platted and recorded in May 1926 by Fred J. Walsh.<sup>42</sup> On 4 June 1926 Fred J. Walsh conveyed by Warranty Deed Lots 1 through 370 inclusive to the Aurora Trust & Savings Bank, Trustee.<sup>43</sup> On 12 June 1930 Aurora Trust & Savings Bank conveyed ownership of Country Club Estates Subdivision to the Broadway Trust & Savings Bank, Aurora.<sup>44</sup> On 27 June 1940, the Broadway Trust & Savings Bank conveyed by Deed in Trust Lots 1 through 370 in Country Club Estates to Elliott S. Denney as Successor Trustee.<sup>45</sup> On 27 October 1943, Denney conveyed ownership of all unsold lots in Country Club Estates back to Fred J. Walsh, and on 27 February 1946 Fred J. Walsh, of Evanston, Illinois, Quit Claimed all the unsold lots to Merchants National Bank of Aurora as Trustee.<sup>46</sup> On 10 April 1947, Merchants National Bank of Aurora conveyed by Quit Claim Deed Lots 21, 22, 23, and 138 in Country Club Estates to David H. Armstrong, of the City of Aurora. The deed was made “upon the conditions, (1) That the premises shall be used for single residence purposes only, (2) That no dwelling shall be erected upon said premises costing less than Ten Thousand Dollars (\$10,000.00)”, and

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<sup>40</sup> Kane County Recorder Grantor-Grantee Index, Book 807, p. 57, 97, 404-5.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., Book 808, p. 607.; Ibid., Book 924, p. 59.

<sup>42</sup> Kane County Recorder Plat Book 26, Page 7.

<sup>43</sup> Kane County Recorder Grantor-Grantee Index, Book 810, p. 212.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., Book 894, p. 350.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., Book 1117, p. 194.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., Book 1190, p. 437; Ibid., Book 1273, p. 347-348.

(3) That said property will never be sold, conveyed or leased to any person not of the Caucasian Race,” and that “these conditions...be construed as covenants running with the land”.<sup>47</sup> On 5 June 1953, David H. Armstrong deeded the East Half of Lot 22 and all of Lots 23, 31, 32, and 33 to Thelma M. Greyer.<sup>48</sup> On 8 August 1961 Thelma M. and John E. Greyer deeded the East Half of Lot 22 and all of Lot 23 to Mackenzie and Ruth S. Macintyre. The Warranty Deed stipulated a number of conditions to be met by the Grantee: “the Grantee agrees to build only a single family, one-story residence and garage on said property, said residence to have not less than 1600 square feet of living area, exclusive of garage or breezeway. Said residence shall not be constructed in the so-called “bi-level” type of architecture and shall not have a flat roof”. In addition, the “Grantee agrees to purchase all lumber and millwork used in the construction of said residence from Greyer Lumber Company, 720 Terry Avenue, Aurora, Illinois”.<sup>49</sup> On 24 November 1981, Mackenzie and Ruth S. Macintyre, of Broward County, Florida conveyed by Warranty Deed in Trust to The Northern Trust Company, Trustee, the East Half of Lot 22 and all of Lot 23.<sup>50</sup> On 11 October 1985, The Northern Trust Company, Trustee, conveyed by Trustee Deed the East Half of Lot 22 and all of Lot 23 in Country Club Estates, address 1419 Prairie Street, to Townsend L. Way, Jr. and his wife, Elsie Way, of 513 West Downer Place, Aurora.<sup>51</sup> On 17 June 2016, T. Lawrence Way III, Executor of the Estate of Townsend L. Way, Jr., deceased, sold by Executor’s Deed the East Half of Lot 22 and all of Lot 23 in Country Club Estates, known locally as 1419 Prairie Street, Aurora, to Aurora University, a not-for-profit corporation, for the sum of \$400,000.<sup>52</sup>

The residential structure occupying the East Half of Lot 22 and all of Lot 23 in Country Club Estates, commonly known as 1419 Prairie Street, was constructed circa 1962. The City of Aurora Zoning & Planning Department has bound ledger books from the Aurora City Building Department that contain an Index of Contractor Permits starting in the 1870s and ending in the 1970s. The Contractor Permit Index is organized by street addresses. An entry was found for 1419 Prairie Street dated 26 July 1962 (Permit No. D920). The work being permitted was described in abbreviation as “Erect a one-family

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., Book 1347, p. 316, Doc. #578218.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., Book 1629, p. 139, Doc. #725718.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., Book 2094, p. 175-76, Doc. #955681.

<sup>50</sup> Kane County Recorder Doc. #1593561.

<sup>51</sup> Kane County Recorder Doc. #1742354.

<sup>52</sup> Kane County Recorder Doc. #2016K030251.

residence with garage”. The estimated cost of the construction was recorded as \$87,140.00. The Owner was listed as Mackenzie Macintyre and the Contractor was listed as N. S. Abens & Son. The permit gave the estimated total floor area as 3,113 square feet.<sup>53</sup> The property at 1419 Prairie Street occupies the East Half of Lot 22 and all of Lot 23 in Country Club Estates. The Macintyres purchased the property on 8 August 1961, and the building permit was issued just short of one year later. The 1960 Aurora City Directory listed Mackenzie and Ruth S. Macintyre living at 74 South View Street, an American Foursquare residence in what is now Aurora’s near West Side Historic District.<sup>54</sup> Mackenzie Macintyre was described as President of Alba Manufacturing, where his brother John served as secretary and treasurer.<sup>55</sup> The contractor, N. S. Abens & Son, was a construction company started by Nicholas S. Abens. The 1930 federal population census of Aurora, Illinois listed Nicholas S. Abens as a 23-year-old carpenter working in the Realty industry.<sup>56</sup> The 1959 Aurora City Directory listed Nicholas S. Abens, a General Contractor, and his wife Elsie M. Abens, living at 959 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, a Ranch-style home on Aurora’s East Side.<sup>57</sup> Townsend L. Way, Jr. and his wife Elsie, purchased 1419 Prairie Street in 1985. The 1974 Aurora City Directory listed Townsend L. and Elsie Way living at 513 West Downer Place, an Italianate style residence in what is now Aurora’s near West Side Historic District (NRHP #86001484).<sup>58</sup> In 1996 Townsend and Elsie Way were listed at 1419 Prairie Street.<sup>59</sup> In 2016, following the death of Townsend L. Way, Jr. in Broward County, Florida, T. Lawrence Way III, Executor of the Estate of Townsend L. Way, Jr., sold the house and property at 1419 Prairie Street to Aurora University.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> City of Aurora Zoning & Planning Department.

<sup>54</sup> National Park Service, *National Register of Historic*, accessed 5 September 2019, <http://gis.hpa.state.il.us>.

<sup>55</sup> *U.S. Public Records Index, 1950-1993, Volume 1*, accessed 28 February and 14 April 2019, <https://www.ancestry.com>.

<sup>56</sup> U.S. City Directories 1822-1995. *Finch & McCullough’s Aurora (Kane County, Illinois) City Directory 1954*, accessed 15 March 2019, <https://www.ancestry.com>.

<sup>57</sup> *U.S. Public Records Index, 1950-1993, Volume 1*.

<sup>58</sup> National Park Service.

<sup>59</sup> *U.S. Public Records Index, 1950-1993, Volume 1*.

<sup>60</sup> Kane County Recorder.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

The residence located at 1419 Prairie Street is a timber Ranch house with an attached garage, constructed in circa 1962. The residence is now used as a contractor's office.

B. Description of Exterior

1. Over-all dimensions:

Building footprint is approximately 4,145 square feet.

2. Foundations:

The foundation is composed of poured concrete.

3. Walls:

The residence has a U-shaped footprint.

The exterior walls include board siding.

4. Structural system, framing:

The residence has wood frame walls.

5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads:

The residence has front and rear concrete stoops.

6. Chimneys:

There is a large rectangular brick chimney on the east wing and a small chimney on the west wing.

7. Openings:

a. Doorways and Doors:

The main entry is on the south side and includes a wood entry door with wood screen door and sidelights. There are also two rear doors on the north side and west wing.

The attached garage has a large rolling wood door on the west face.

b. Windows and Shutters:

The majority of windows are 2/2 double hung wood frame, and there are a few small casement windows. The southeast front windows are bayed with a cement and brick support.

8. Roof:

a. Shape, covering:

The house has a three-part gabled asphalt shingle roof.

B. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans: The residence is single-story with a basement and attic. The floorplan has been altered to accommodate offices for the construction company that is currently using the space as a field office.

a. First Floor:

The residence is U-shaped and divided into three sections: east, west, and center.

Main entry is north into a small entry hallway. To the east is the east wing, to the west is a large room and the west wing.

The east wing includes 9 rooms, a hallway, and closet space. Starting at the southeast corner, one larger living room space has been divided in four offices (Rooms 1-4). Room 1 includes a fireplace with detailed wood carvings, located on the north wall. Room 2 includes half of the southern bay window, Room 3 includes the other half. Without the temporary office walls,

this would have been a large room with a fireplace, bay window, and decorative wood trim and moldings. A long hallway runs north along the west wall of the east wing, with three closets on the hallway's east wall. To the east are rooms 5-8.

Room 5, located at the southeast corner of the hallway, includes three large windows on the east wall and a large closet on the west wall. On the south end are a bathroom (Room 6) at the southeast corner and a small closet at the southwest corner. Room 7 is a large room at the northeast corner of the east wing, which includes windows on the east wall and a dressing room/closet on the west. There is also a large master bathroom (Room 8) on the south wall. Finally, at the north end of the hallway is Room 9, with a closet on the east wall and windows on the west.

To the west of the entry hallway is Room 10, a large living space with windows on the north and south walls. Continuing to the west is the west wing of the residence, which includes Rooms 11-13 and the attached garage. Room 11 is a formal dining room; the room has windows on the south and west sides, as well as more elaborate moldings, trim, and light sconces. To the north is Room 12, a kitchen with mid-twentieth century cabinets, stove top, vents, and ovens. North of this is Room 13, which is a small utility room leading to the basement stairs and the garage.

b. Ground Floor/Basement:

The full basement includes unfinished space on the west side and semi-finished spaces to the east. These areas have cabinets along the walls, paneling, and doors with modern stained glass windows. There is a small bathroom located in the basement.

2. Flooring:

Floors in the house are original wood.

3. Wall and Ceiling Finish:

Walls and ceilings typically have a drywall finish, some walls have mid-twentieth century wallpaper. Temporary walls separate workspaces.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors:

Interior doors are paneled hollow core doors with wood veneer.

b. Windows:

The house has primarily double hung windows; the window at the southeast end is a bay window.

6. Decorative features and trim:

There is wood trim throughout the residence, with more elaborate trim and molding in the “entertaining” areas of the house, such as the living rooms and dining room.

7. Hardware:

Hardware consists of unadorned brass or brushed steel hinges, knobs, locks, and hooks.

8. Mechanical equipment:

a. Heating, air conditioning, ventilation:

The house has a modern furnace and central air conditioning.

b. Lighting:

Lighting is a mix of mid-twentieth century incandescent light fixtures and more modern fluorescent.

c. Plumbing:

Plumbing is a mix of original mid-twentieth century and modern.

d. Other mechanical:

The house includes an original electric intercom system.

C. Site:

1. General setting and orientation:

The property is located at 1419 Prairie Street, Aurora, Kane County, Illinois 60506. The residence faces south onto Prairie Street. The property is bound to the north by Aurora University construction, to the east by 441 South Randall, to the south by Prairie Street, and to the west by 1433 Prairie Street. The property includes the residence, mature landscaping, and a lawn. This residence has a rear courtyard (open to the north) that distinguishes it from the surrounding residential arrangements.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Bibliography

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

City of Aurora Zoning & Planning Department, Aurora City Building Department, Index of Contractor Permits, February 28 and 14 April, 2019.

Kane County Recorder Land Search Records – Grantor-Grantee Index, September 3-5, 2019.

Mr. Steve Broadwell - Planner: Zoning and Planning Division, personal communication, February 22-26, 2019.

Ms. Jill Morgan – Planner: Zoning and Planning Division, personal communication, February 22-28, 2019.

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*U.S. Public Records Index, 1950-1993, Volume 1.*, accessed 5 September 2019, <https://www.ancestry.com>.

*United States Federal Census: Population Census for Chicago, Cook County, Illinois 1930, 1940*, accessed 20-27 August 2019, <https://www.ancestry.com>.

*United States Federal Census: Population Census for Aurora, Kane County, Illinois 1930, 1940*, accessed 20-27 August 2019, <https://www.ancestry.com>.

Village of Montgomery, Illinois. "History of Montgomery", accessed 20 February 2019, <https://ci.montgomery.il.us>.

Wm. Le Baron Jr. & Co. *The Past and Present of Kane County, Illinois*. Chicago: Blanchard, Wm. Le Baron Jr. & Co., 1878, accessed 1 February 2019, <https://archive.org>.

#### E. Supplemental Material

1. See IIIA (Sources of Information) for early views and architectural drawing credits.

### PART IV. METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH

#### A. Research Strategy:

Research undertaken to document the property at 1419 Prairie Street included archival, field, and report preparation. Archival research was undertaken prior to field investigations and included examination of local histories and records as well as known architectural documents to develop an architectural and historical context for the building and grounds. The field investigations included photographing and documenting interior and exterior structural elements of the building in its present conditions, as well as preparing detailed floor plans and footprints of the building.

B. Actual Research Process:

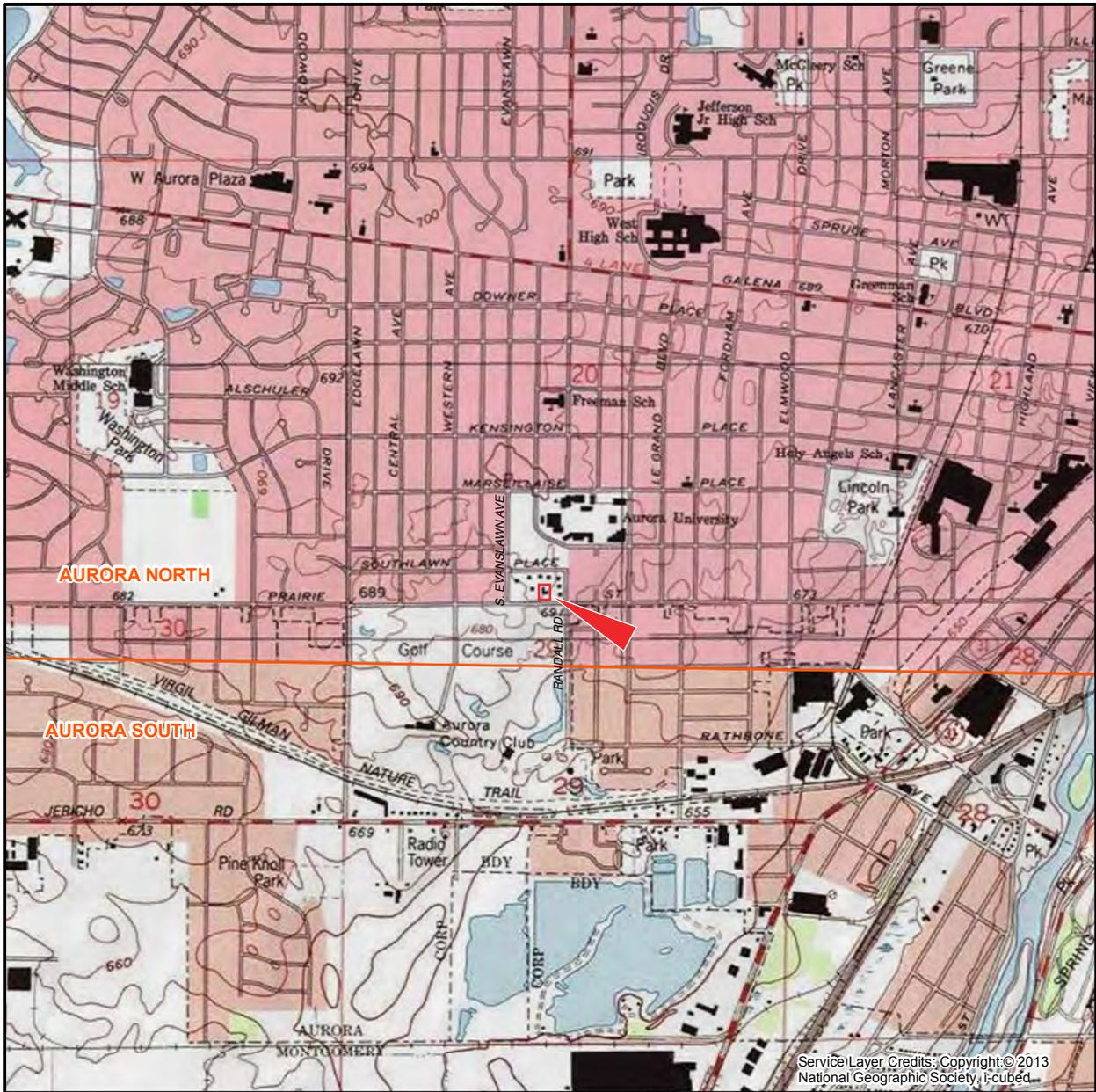
Actual research included archival, field, and report preparation. In addition, information regarding the history of property at 1419 Prairie Street was provided by personal communications and the City of Aurora; this information included newspaper articles, historical documentation, and other secondary sources.

C. Research Staff

1. Primary Preparer: Ms. Marcy Prchal, Architectural Historian, Public Service Archaeology & Architecture Program, University of Illinois
2. Archival Research and Preparer: Mr. Christopher Flynn, Public Service Archaeology & Architecture Program, University of Illinois.
3. Photographers: Mr. Chris Flynn and Ms. Marcy Prchal, Public Service Archaeology & Architecture Program, University of Illinois
4. Delineator: Ms. Susan Brannock-Gaul, Graphic Artist, Public Service Archaeology & Architecture Program, University of Illinois
5. Additional Staff: Dr. Kevin McGowan, Program Director, Public Service Archaeology & Architecture Program, University of Illinois.

PART V. PROJECT INFORMATION

The demolition of the property at 1419 Prairie Street was reviewed by the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office under the Illinois State Agency Historic Preservation Act (20 ILCS 3420). The production of this report serves as mitigation for the adverse effect of demolition of the structure located at 1419 Prairie Street, Aurora, Kane County, Illinois.



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**1419 Prairie Street**  
Aurora, Illinois 60506  
Kane County



**Quadrangle Location**  
Aurora North Quadrangle  
7.5 Minute Series (Topographic) 1993



HIBS No.  
K-2021-1-7



Sheet 1 of 1

Aerial Photograph Obtained from ESRI World Imagery - January 2019



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Prairie Street

**1419 Prairie Street**  
Aurora, Illinois 60506  
Kane County



Location

**Site Plan**

 1419 Prairie Street Property

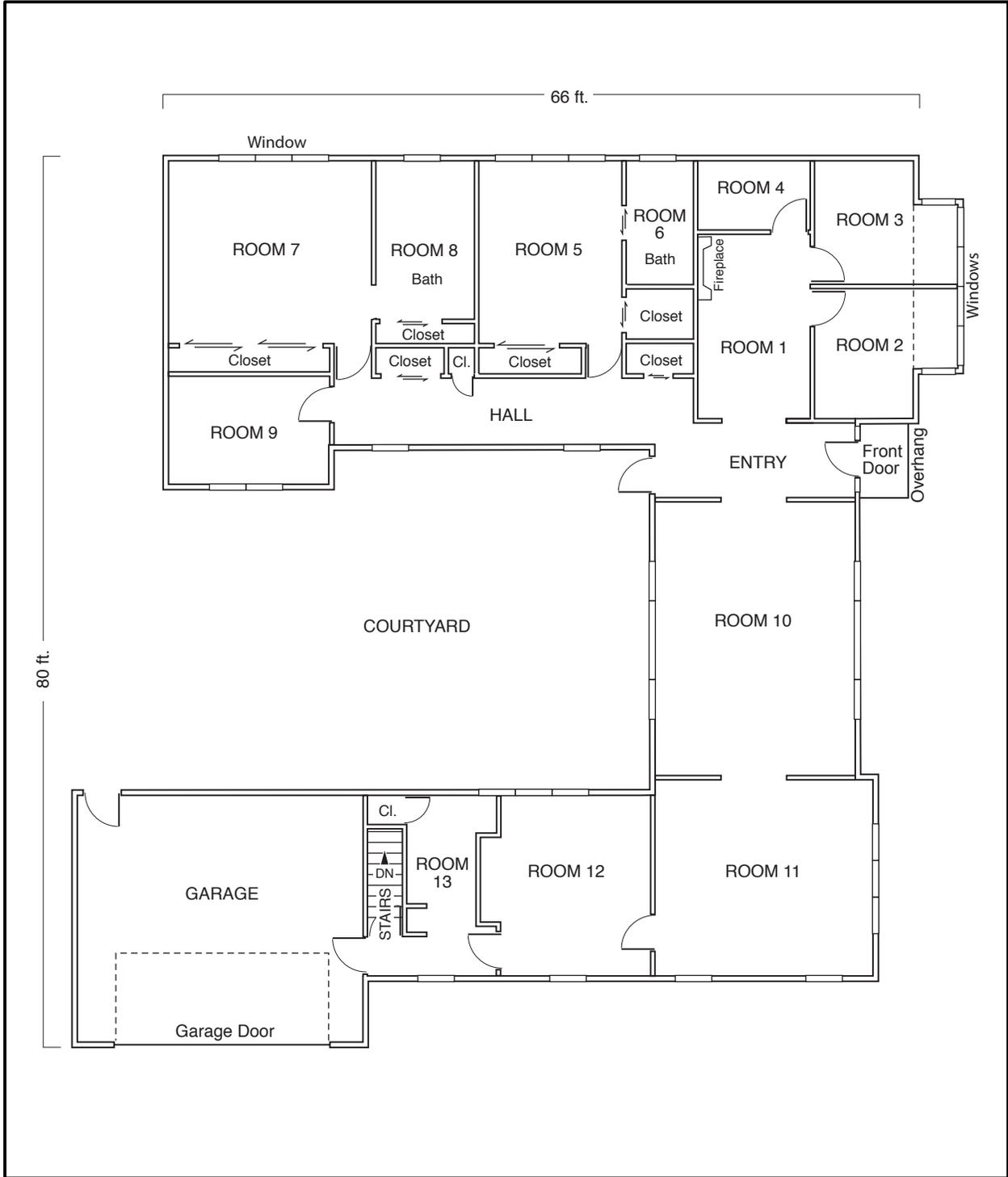


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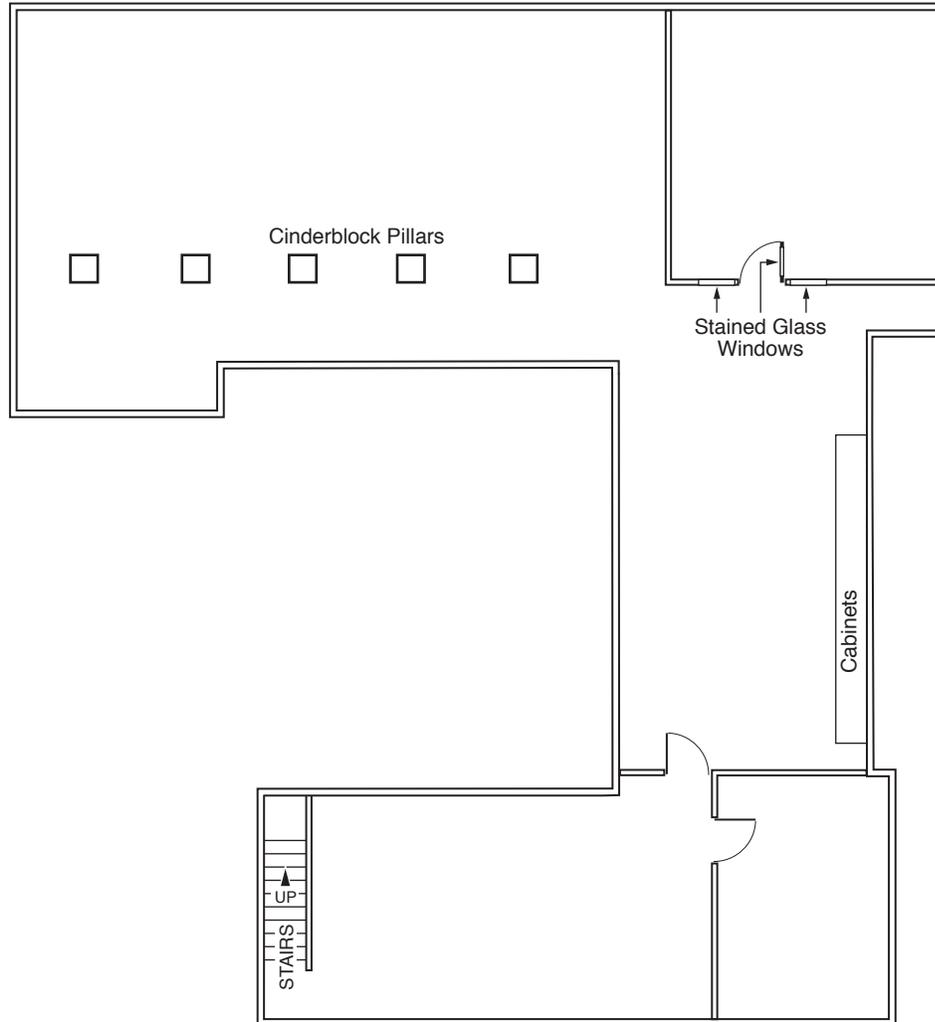
**1419 Prairie Street**  
 Aurora, Illinois 60506  
 Kane County

**Plan - First Floor**



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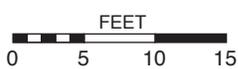


1419 Prairie Street  
 Aurora, Illinois 60506  
 Kane County

Plan - Basement



HIBS No.  
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K-2021-1-7.30: Chris Flynn, 8/14/2019, facing northeast, Garage interior

K-2021-1-7.31: Chris Flynn, 8/14/2019, facing northeast, Basement

K-2021-1-7.32: Chris Flynn, 8/14/2019, facing southeast, Basement



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Prairie Street

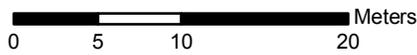
**1419 Prairie Street**  
Aurora, Illinois 60506  
Kane County



Location

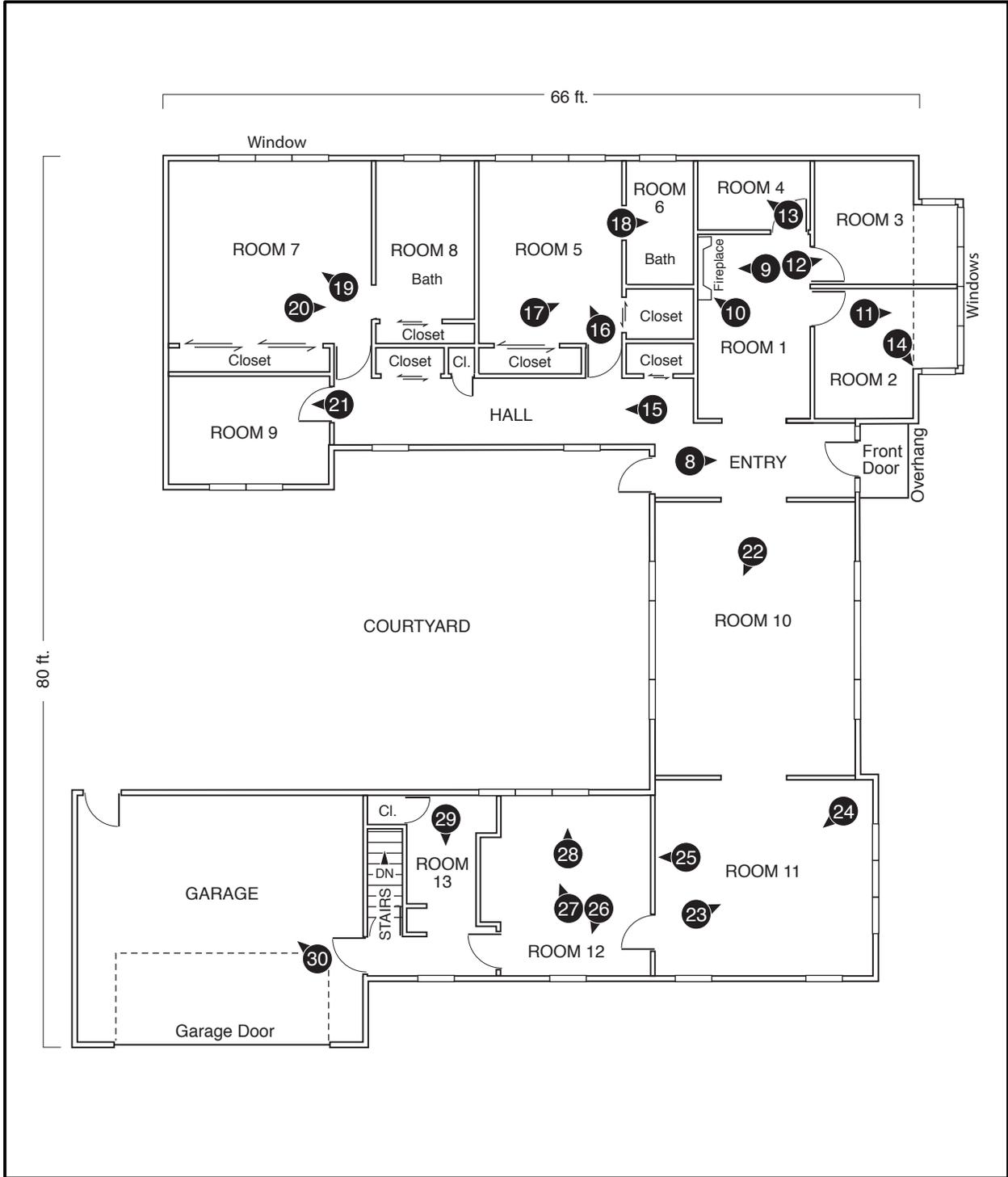
**Photo Key - Exterior**

(Photos 1 - 7)



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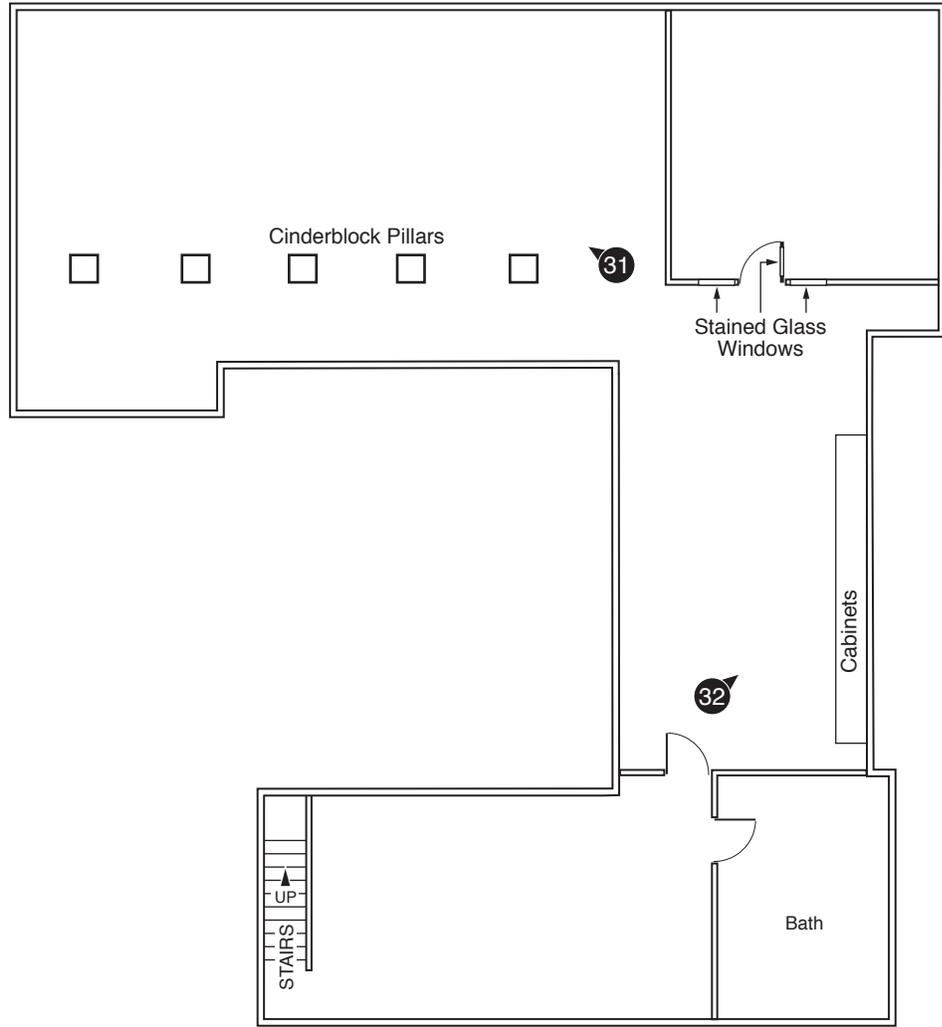
**1419 Prairie Street**  
 Aurora, Illinois 60506  
 Kane County

**Photo Key - First Floor**  
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1419 Prairie Street  
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 Kane County

**Photo Key - Basement**

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